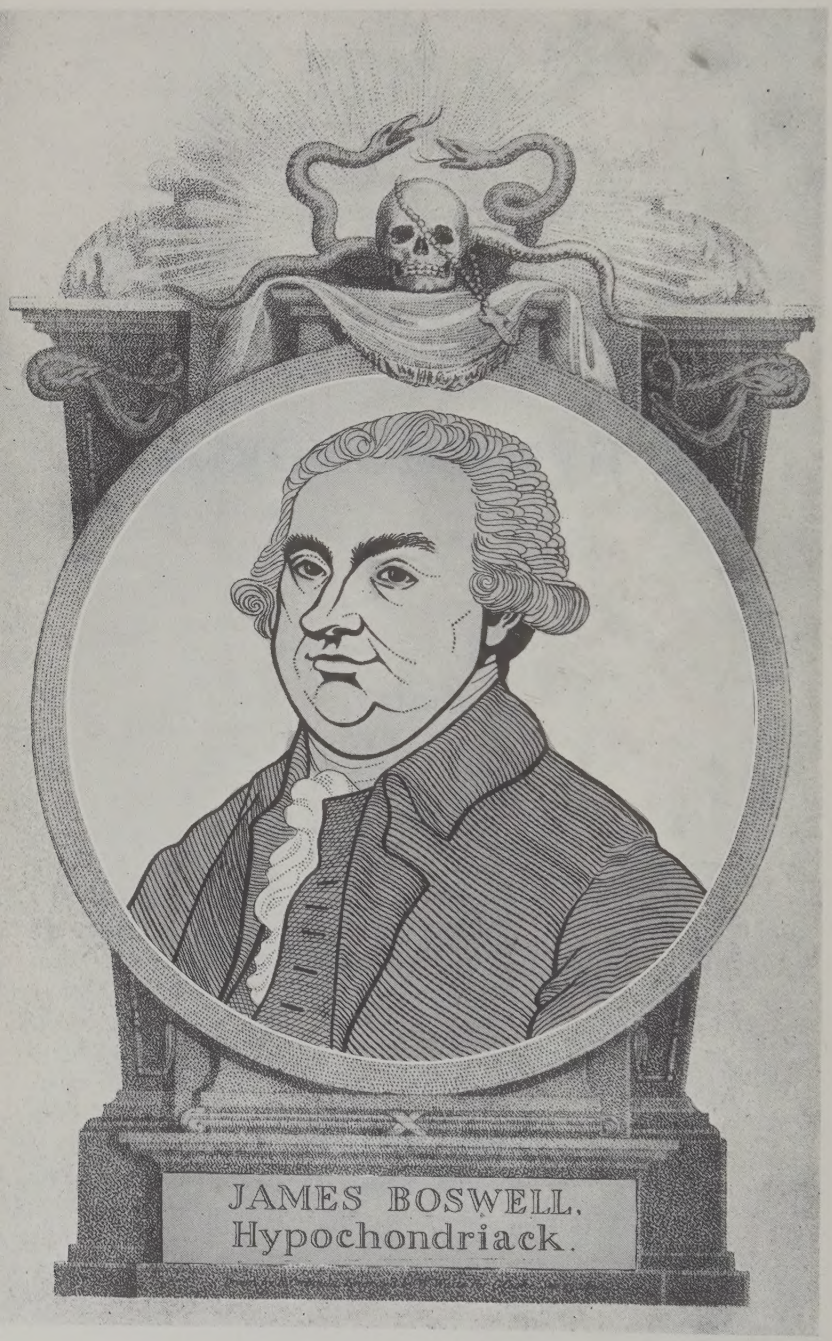
THE HYPOCHONDRIACK.

VOLUME I.

AMS PRESS
NEW YORK


JAMES BOSWELL.
Hypochondriack.

The HYPOCHONDRIACK

Being the Seventy Essays by the celebrated biographer, JAMES BOSWELL, appearing in the LONDON MAGAZINE, *from* November, 1777, *to* August, 1783, and here first Reprinted.

Edited *by* MARGERY BAILEY (Ph.D., Yale),
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Stanford University.

VOLUME I.

WITHDRAWN

STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
STANFORD UNIVERSITY, CALIFORNIA
1928

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Boswell, James, 1740-1795.
The hypochondriack.

I. Title.
PR3325.A7 1973 824'.6 78-39512
ISBN 0-404-07654-8

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Reprinted by arrangement with Stanford University Press

From the edition of 1928, Stanford
First AMS edition published in 1973
Manufactured in the United States of America

International Standard Book Number:
Complete Set: 0-404-07654-8
Volume I: 0-404-07655-6

AMS PRESS INC.
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10003

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
WITH GREAT RESPECT AND AFFECTION
TO THE MEMORY OF
"A VERY SENSIBLE, GOOD SORT OF MAN,"

JAMES BOSWELL

OF AUCHINLECK AND LONDON.

PREFACE

Oscar Wilde and Dr. Johnson would have agreed on one subject. "There is only one thing worse than to be talked about," said the author of *Reading Gaol*, "and that is, not to be talked about"; and the Rambler, thinking more particularly about the fourth estate, observed: "There is nothing more dreadful to an author than neglect, compared with which reproach, hatred, and opposition are names of happiness." They have both ignored the still more uneasy position of one who is the object of discussion and neglect at once. This has been the experience of no man more than James Boswell.

Following the ill-natured comments of superior persons from Walpole and Gray down to Macaulay, or the emotional apologies of such as Carlyle, readers of English literature have wondered that a man who was said to be so trivial could write so good a book as the *Life of Johnson*. Even those who are most anxious to emphasize his genius have universally regarded Boswell as a quaint or comic figure. There is some excuse for such an attitude toward him, because he did not know himself thoroughly, and the only autobiographical records well known thus far—his letters, his *Boswelliana*, and the references to himself in his works on Johnson and on Corsica—fluctuate between gaiety and wretchedness, without great evidence of his solid parts. These familiar materials are not, however, the only surviving records of Boswell. An undeveloped source of information concerning the deeper side of his character lies in the informal essays which he printed at various times in Scottish and English periodicals. Few admirers of Boswell realize the existence of these pieces, and even his biographers have either neglected or misinterpreted them. The most important of the fugitive papers are the essays under the general title *The Hypochondriack*, a series kept up by Boswell alone, and published in the London Magazine through some of the busiest years of his middle life, from 1777 to 1783.

This series forms the text of the present volumes. It will be found to open a perspective of Boswell's thinking, his motives, his reaction to that dissipated, irresponsible life of his, very different from the traditional view of his character. It is impossible, of course, that a perusal of *The Hypochondriack* should change our

estimate of Boswell completely. He was weak, and no doubt some of the lighter essays and some of my notes will add new weaknesses to those we already know. But the importance of these compositions and their "secret history" lies in their revelation of the mercurial biographer as a man conscious of his inconstancy, unwilling to succumb to the Old Man in him without a struggle, and capable of carrying out a set task of writing, chiefly self-criticism, once a month for nearly six years.

The papers have a value and a charm quite aside from their interest for us as a side-light on the reputation of the prince of biographers. They reveal not only the character of Boswell, but the life and thought of an eighteenth-century gentleman. There is very little satire upon contemporary customs and foibles, since the exposition is not objective, after the manner of *The Spectator;* but in the intimate presentation of Boswell's prejudices, illusions, political persuasions, and social standards, we glimpse the restless, bustling pageant of the important transition period in which he lived. Moreover, with all the earnestness that lies behind it, the series does not lack the unfailing appeal of the familiar essay. Few of such collections, from Montaigne to Lamb, are composed in so confiding a tone, or create such a sense of immediate connection between author and reader. And, like all of Boswell's writing, *The Hypochondriack* is full of the eager zest for ideas and experiences, the delight in a good story, the clear vivid wording of it, and the indescribable relish of human affairs, that identify and endear him.

It is my hope that the seventy numbers of *The Hypochondriack,* and the study which introduces them, may remove the "mysterious inconsistency" between Boswell's character and his literary power. He was not a "natural genius," glittering inexplicably in one great work and strangely incapable otherwise. With him genius was indeed largely the art of taking infinite pains—a matter of discipline. He tells us in the *Life of Johnson* what length of time, what persistence, what concentrated effort that work required, in spite of his zeal and affection for his subject. In these essays and their story we can perceive the developing brilliance of style and the exercise of dogged pertinacity which made the writing of a great biography possible to a person so volatile as Boswell.

Like any editor, I trust that the work which has occupied several of my years will find readers who delight in it; but I especially wish this consummation for the sake of those who have helped me to accomplish the design, since my thanks alone cannot be sufficient reward for what they have done. The generous interest of Dr. Chauncey Brewster Tinker, who allowed me to use his *Letters of James Boswell* while it was yet in manuscript, has been seconded by the consideration of the staff of Yale University Library, who gave me their constant kindly assistance while I was working at the university, and supplied me with photostats of the essays from the files of the London Magazine after I had left New Haven. I am also indebted to Dr. Frederick Pottle of Yale, accomplished Boswellian, for suggestions and corrections. My small Latin and less Greek have placed me under lasting obligation to the enthusiasm and patience of the faculty in classical languages at Stanford University. Dr. Augustus Taber Murray read proof on all of the passages in Greek, and gave me valuable information upon the eighteenth-century methods of transcribing Greek characters; Dr. Jefferson Elmore and Dr. Henry Rushton Fairclough traced many elusive references for me; and Dr. Hazel Hansen devoted hours to the verification of classical quotations.

Unfortunately, I cannot give a complete list of the amiable persons who have assisted in the search for obdurately mysterious references, because many have helped my helpers without being known to me. But I am gratefully aware of the time, energy, and cordial interest expended on this book by Mr. John Mill McClelland, Mr. Harford Holmes Hays, Mrs. Miranda Goodrie Willoughby, and Mr. Webster Finley Street, of Stanford University. The generous and zealous care of Dr. Leah Dennis of Montevallo, Alabama, has been my mainstay in checking cross-references and preparing the index. Most of all I remember with a thankful mind the unflagging encouragement given me by two well-loved fellow-students, who when this work was yet but a catechumen, frequently put aside their own studies to help me in mine—Dr. James Hall Pitman of Indiana University and Dr. William Clyde DeVane of Yale University.

When I had spent several years on *The Hypochondriack,* I discovered that an edition of the essays was announced by Elkin Mathews, Ltd., of London; the reasons why it has not appeared,

and why I am allowed to bring out my edition in a free field, are best expressed in the candid and gracious letter sent to me by Mr. A. W. Evans, the editor of the projected English publication:

13 July 1926.

Dear Miss Bailey,

Please forgive my long delay in answering your letter.

My edition of the "Hypochondriack" was in type, & ready to be published when a fire took place at the printer's about a month ago, & the type was entirely destroyed. I have decided not to go over the work again as the edition which you are preparing will fill the gap I am sure more adequately than mine would have done.

I am, of course, exceedingly interested in your edition, & would be very grateful if you would let me know when it is to be published. Also, it would give me great pleasure to correspond with you on matters of Boswellian & Johnsonian interest.

Yours sincerely,

A. W. Evans
for Elkin Mathews, Ltd.

This is one of the instances of magnanimous self-effacement which makes the scholarly life a high experience.

Margery Bailey

Palo Alto, California

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VOLUME I

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JAMES BOSWELL, HYPOCHONDRIACK *Frontispiece*

Drawing by the editor, in an eighteenth-century border. The study is an effort to capture the essential characteristics of Boswell's appearance, from a comparison of these similar but varying representations: the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, the profile drawing by George Dance, and the painting by Henry Singleton (see frontispiece to Volume II)

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From a contemporary print

TEXTUAL NOTE

The text of this edition is the text of the essays as originally printed in the London Magazine, with all the irregularities of spelling, punctuation, and structure, except for such instances as I mention in the notes. The long *ſ* and certain characters no longer employed in transcribing Greek it has been necessary to replace by modern symbols.

Among the sources most frequently referred to, *Life of J.* indicates G. B. Hill's edition of Boswell's biography, in the American issue common in most American libraries; it has a pagination different from that of the English issue used by Hill and Tinker in their work on Johnson and Boswell. The fifth volume of the *Life,* covering the *Tour to the Hebrides,* I distinguish by the abbreviation *Hebr.* I have used also throughout the notes, the *Letters of Samuel Johnson* and *Johnsonian Miscellanies* edited by G. B. Hill; the *Letters of James Boswell* edited by C. B. Tinker; the *Letters of Horace Walpole* edited by Cunningham; *Lord Chesterfield's Letters* edited by Bradshaw; the *Works of Johnson* edited by Murphy (issue of 1787); Dodsley's *Collection of Poems* in the issue of 1758; Swift's *Works* edited by Scott (1883).

I allude to the various collections of essays, the classic *Lives,* and such works as *Rasselas, Gulliver's Travels, Amelia,* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse* by number, section, or chapter—not by page.

M. B.

INTRODUCTION.

I. THE HISTORY OF THE HYPOCHONDRIACK

1. EXTERNAL FACTS OF COMPOSITION AND PUBLICATION

Boswell conceived the plan of writing a series of essays entitled *The Hypochondriack* while he was traveling in Italy in 1765. He even wrote a paper, at Milan, "in a gay flow of spirits," giving it the number 10, in order to pretend that he was already in the midst of his project.[1] When he was called home from his European tour, he forsook his design, although he published short essays, sometimes in connected groups, from time to time.[2] In 1771 or shortly before, he acquired an interest in the London Magazine,[3] and in this publication, in October 1777, without previous announcement of any sort, *The Hypochondriack* began. For nearly six years Boswell wrote a regular monthly essay, without assistance from friends or correspondents. No break occurred until the very end of the series, and when it came, it was, I suspect, the effect of changes in the magazine rather than the desire of Boswell. The sixty-ninth essay appeared in June 1783, with no hint of any intention to conclude; in the same issue a change of editorial policy was announced by the publishers. The July number contained no *Hypochondriack*. The seventieth and last essay was published in the August issue, prefaced by a note informing the readers that *The Hypochondriack* would appear no more, and uttering a conventionally civil desire for other papers from the same hand. The distant tone of this curt editorial communication, taken with the curiously defensive and wistful note of Boswell's farewell essay, leads one to believe that there had been a change among the proprietors of the periodical "in which he had some concern," and that a new staff did not wish to continue material long familiar to the readers of the magazine.

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[1] Boswell gives this information as explanation for including the old essay in *The Hypochondriack* as number 10.

[2] Papers by Boswell himself in his collection of *British Essays in Favor of the Brave Corsicans*, the three connected essays on *The Profession of a Player*, published in the London Magazine for 1770, and various scattered compositions such as those included in *The Hypochondriack*.

[3] The date is uncertain. See his letter to Garrick, September 1771, in which he mentions his essays on players, "published in the London Magazine in which I have some concern." (*Letters of B.*, 1. 183.)

The Hypochondriack appeared anonymously throughout, but we know that James Boswell wrote the essays because he says so, in letters to his friends Sir Alexander Dick and the Reverend William Temple.[4] (He is otherwise curiously reticent about them.) Even without this external evidence the authorship would be easily established, however. The style is Boswell's inimitable combination of gravity, confiding intimacy, and love of the dramatic; moreover, parallels to his letters, his *Boswelliana,* and his *Life of Johnson,* are to be found scattered through the series.

In preparation for some of the essays Boswell read works by other men in order to stimulate his ideas;[5] sometimes he had a few notes of his own in readiness; most of the time the papers "were composed while the hour of publication was so near that [he] had just time enough to do them with rapid agitation."[6] When there was not time enough even for agitated composition, he fell back upon essays which he had written previously. There are but four of these—numbers 10, 47, 49, and 68. Number 10, on truth, is the essay written in Milan years before under that number; the others have no connection with any idea of a series, all being papers which Boswell had published at various times in the Public Advertiser: number 49, on identification by numbered tags, from the issue of January 22, 1768; number 68, on executions, from that of April 26, 1768; number 47, on the new freezing process, from that of June 2, 1770.

The last essay contains a hint that Boswell intended to gather the papers together in book form.[6a] Possibly it was with this object in view that he approached Dr. Johnson in 1783: "I told him I should send him some *Essays* which I had written, which I hoped he would be so good as to read, and pick out the best ones."[7] It may have been the crushing answer—"Nay, Sir, send me only the good ones; don't make *me* pick them"—which demolished the project; it may have been merely a press of cares and affairs. At any rate, nothing ever came of the intention, and it was never mentioned again.

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[4] To Sir Alexander, *Letters of B.*, 2. 279 (1778) and 2. 289 (1779); to Temple, *ibid.*, 2. 301 (1780).

[5] As he says himself in *Hyp.* 69. [6] *Hyp.* 70.

[6a] See final paragraph of this section, page 24. [7] *Life of J.*, 4. 207.

2. THE "SECRET HISTORY" OF THE SERIES

"I love a little secret history," said Dr. Johnson; but he did not always seize the opportunity to hear it. In waving aside Boswell's proffered essays, he was probably dismissing something that Boswell was equally anxious to discover to him—the intimate personal story involved in the planning and composing of a series with so extraordinary a title. Whether from this rebuff or no, Boswell is unusually reticent on the subject of *The Hypochondriack*, and the result for us is a puzzle as teasing as any in literary history: what was Boswell's purpose in writing essays for six years? That there was such a purpose is indisputable; everyone who has examined the essays in connection with the scattered records of Boswell's life has sensed its presence, although the vagueness with which it is suggested has allowed of as many interpretations as there are students of the subject.

Within the essays Boswell gives us little assistance. He announces in his first paper that he writes merely "to divert Hypochondriacks of every degree from dwelling on their uneasiness," and to "insensibly communicate to them that good-humour, which if it does not make life rise to felicity, at least preserves it from wretchedness"; he speaks of himself as having escaped at last from the disease, and as feeling a pleasant glow in "the hope of contributing to the relief of many as unhappy as [he has] formerly been." This is a charming attitude, not uncharacteristic of the genial gentleman;[8] but modern students detect in the writing of this long series, other motives much more personal, which he has left unexpressed. At least three theories are advanced on the subject: one, that Boswell wrote the essays merely from a desire to shine as an author;[9] another, that he was secretly preparing

[8] See Scott's notes on Croker's *Correspondence and Diaries*, 2. 33:

> [Boswell] was very fond of attending on capital punishments, and . . . . he used to visit the prisoners on the day before execution with the singular wish to make the condemned wretches laugh by dint of buffoonery, in which he not infrequently succeeded.

This behavior, which Scott misunderstood so completely, is shown again in another statement from Boswell himself:

> My spirits have been still more sunk, by seeing Sir Joshua Reynolds almost as low as myself. . . . . I force myself to be a great deal with him, to do what is in my power to amuse him. (*Letters of B.*, 2. 441.)

[9] Fitzgerald, *Life of James Boswell*, 1. 223; Ralli, *Boswell*, Westm. Rev., 179. 270 ff.

himself to write the *Life of Johnson;*[10] a third, that he is morbidly displaying the symptoms of a distracted mind from motives of vanity and self-pity[11]—or as alternative, that he is palliating his lax habits by hypocritical approval of good conduct, carried out "with much practical ingenuity."[12] No one of these explanations is completely satisfactory.

However sincere, Boswell's opening expression of purpose may be set aside as only partly true, since in the thirty-ninth essay he presents himself as hypochondriacal again but struggling through the composition to prove that he can accomplish a set task even in the slough of despond. Still more important is the admission at the end of the series: "Be they what they may, I should not have written them had I not been urged on by the obligation of a monthly task which I imposed on myself."[13] He adds that he will miss the recurring duty, by which his mind had been "agreeably braced."

We may dismiss too the suggestion that Boswell was writing merely for fame, for although he obviously loved to appear as author and planned any number of works aside from those by which he is known,[14] these facts have no bearing upon *The Hypo-*

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[10] Brown, J. T. T., *James Boswell as Essayist*, Scot. Hist. Rev., 18. 70.

[11] Fitzgerald, *Life of B.*, 1. 211; by the same, *Boswell's Autobiography*, Quart. Rev., 214. 35. Leask, in *James Boswell*, accepts the findings of Fitzgerald. Both allude indirectly to the idea held by many, in varying degrees of seriousness, that Boswell's mind was unbalanced. Cf. Fitzgerald, *Life of B.*, 1. 225; Leask, *op. cit.*, 139; Rogers, *James Boswell*, in *Boswelliana*, 22 n., 190; Scott's note to Croker's *Correspondence*, cited in part above; Collison-Morley, *Baretti and His Friends*, 1. 216 n.

[12] Fitzgerald, *Life of B.*, 2. 225.

[13] *Hyp.* 70.

[14] For a declaration of his feeling about authorship, see the preface to his *Account of Corsica:*

> For my part, I should be proud to be known as an authour; and I have an ardent ambition for literary fame; for of all possessions I should imagine literary fame to be the most valuable. A man who has been able to furnish a book which has been approved by the world, has established himself as a respectable character in distant society, without any danger of having that character lessened by the observation of his weaknesses.

Boswell reprinted this passage as a note to his *Life of J.* (2. 79 n.2), so that we must give it full weight as evidence of his attitude. See also remarks in his *Letters*, *passim;* and remarks in the memoir by Rogers (*Boswelliana*, 16). For a list of Boswell's projected works, see n. 29 below.

chondriack, which was carefully kept anonymous. The essays were presented for criticism to only a few intimate friends,[15] and in the anecdotes and allusions with which the papers are crowded, Boswell connects himself with a definite place and acquaintance but once.[16] He gives intimate details of his romance and of his sufferings, it is true, but the very intimacy of the revelations serves as disguise—it is the sort of thing one does not confide to friends, but which one need not scruple to tell to all the world through the impersonal printed page, because it might be the experience of any man. An interesting phase of this careful veiling is Boswell's appreciation of the fact that his devotion to Johnson might reveal him; as a result, Johnson is quoted by name only in reference to his famous works, without any suggestion of personal acquaintance. In characteristic anecdotes, he is quoted as "a great observer of mankind," or "one of whom more remarks deserve to be remembered than of any person I ever knew," and so on. This meticulous anonymity is the more remarkable because Boswell advised his friend Temple never to publish anonymously, since such a course would bring no reward of fame.[17]

The opinion that Boswell was preparing himself for the composition of the *Life of Johnson* is also unsound.[18] True, the passages in the essays which suggest the *Life* outnumber actual parallels to any other single source, but these expressions are very rarely the sayings of Johnson; what seems to be represented most is the general attitude of Johnson and Boswell on various subjects —mosaics of many different interviews. Boswell conceived himself in these essays as an independent thinker who had added the

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[15] Johnson, William Temple, and Sir Alexander Dick. See "External Facts of Composition," p. 4.

[16] *Hyp.* 9, in which his characteristic love of authenticity obliges him to state where he had met Captain Cook.

[17] *Letters of B.*, 1. 250, April 1776. It is to be noted that this expression occurs but one year before *The Hypochondriack* was begun:

> I shall gladly give all the assistance I can in ushering your volumes into the world. . . . But why not put your name to them, since you hope they will do you credit? For how can *you* get credit for what is anonymous?

See also his remarks on anonymous reviewers, *Hyp.* 14 and notes.

[18] For a full discussion of this point, see Dr. Brown's paper (*cit. supra*) in Scot. Hist. Rev., **18.** 70 (1921), and my criticism of it in Journ. Eng. and Germ. Phil., **22.** 3 (1923).

best thoughts of another to his own store.[19] Many of the essays are developments of topics on which Johnson resolutely refused to talk with Boswell: he had a horror of death, he refused to discuss hypochondria, he had one or two dogmatic opinions about drinking and marriage, and he quite obviously thought love a bore, as a topic for conversation—and these are (with the exception of country life) the only topics to which Boswell devotes groups of three or more essays! Moreover, in the large number of parallel passages which show the essays to be a delightful cento of all of Boswell's recollections, we find represented, not only Johnson and his circle, but Voltaire, Rousseau (anathema to Johnson), a number of anonymous Scots (also anathema), and many good bits from other writings of Boswell himself—his letters, his *Boswelliana*, and his other essays.

It remains to be seen whether vanity and self-justification are the mainsprings of *The Hypochondriack*. Certainly the essays are occupied with Boswell himself; he may aver that he writes for the diversion of his fellow-sufferers, but no one at all familiar with the events of Boswell's life, and his expression concerning himself in the *Life of Johnson* and in his own letters, can doubt that he is here examining his own faults and opinions, to the exclusion of all else. The reason for this introspective quality is not, however, that he is either flattering or justifying himself. Such a course would not demand "the obligation of a monthly task which I imposed on myself." A certain amount of vanity enters into these essays, as into everything that Boswell wrote; a certain amount of justification is also apparent; but the chief purpose of the series was discipline mental and moral. He is assuming a monthly task in order to enforce a regularly recurring concentration of effort upon reading and writing, and in order to settle his ideas upon various subjects which had always puzzled him—with a strong appearance of trying to convert his wavering feelings to opinions not natural to him.

Boswell's biographers have overlooked the fact that whatever he desired for himself—fame, distinction, success—his most constant wish was to be a good man, and that he was conscious how

[19] Cf. the discussion of Boswell's use of his sources, pp. 33–35, 41–44, 52–57.

much his unsettled physical and mental habits contributed to his failure in that respect.[20] In his youth he tried to acquire "an even external tenor," to have "a settled serenity."[21] His friendships with men much older than himself, and his desire to meet great men, were largely caused by his hope of finding an inspiration to lead a sober, righteous, and godly life; his fidelity to Dr. Johnson and General Paoli came from his certainty that these were the most elevating characters he knew.[22] He went to Europe in his early twenties with the hope that he could attain a "serene contentment," and "so much taste as never to be idle for want of elegant occupation"—or, as he told Rousseau, with "*un véritable désir de me perfectionner.*"[23] Disappointed in the effect of Europe, he wrote to Wilkes in 1765, "In the course of our correspondence, you shall have the various schemes which I form for getting tollerably through this strange existence."[24] Of these the most important seems to have been a resort to his love of writing. Certainly it was in this year, 1765, that he formed his plan of writing *The Hypochondriack*—the idea perhaps occurring to him as a result of the "*ébauche de ma vie*" which he had sent to Rousseau at the end of 1764.[25]

He dropped the design of periodical essays almost as soon as it had occurred to him, because he became absorbed in plans for more solid composition,[26] which he hoped might improve his

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[20] See *Letters of B.*, 1. 11, 12, 15, 21, 29, 30 and *passim*. His remarks from time to time that he is a "very good sort of man" (*Letters of B.*, 1. 11, 108) are to be explained by his letter to Rousseau (*ibid.*, 1. 63), in 1764:

Imparfait comme je suis, je me trouve un excellent homme dans le monde comme il exiſte. Mais j'ai une idée qu'il m'eſt possible d'être au dessus du monde comme il eſt: en avant que je suis comme cela, je ne serais content.

[21] *Ibid.*, 1. 15, to John Johnston, 1763.

[22] See the *Account of Corsica*, and indices of *Life of J.*, *Letters of B.*

[23] *Letters of B.*, 1. 56, 59, 79. [24] *Ibid.*, 1. 76.

[25] See *Hyp.* 10 and *Letters of B.*, 1. 63. For another resource, the vows he made to various friends, see the *Life of J.*, 2. 436 n. 4, 499 n. 1; and *Letters of B.*, 1. 95, 142, 164, 236, 251; 2. 405, 427.

[26] The *Journal of a Tour to Corsica*, and data on the political activities of John Wilkes. Boswell mentions the latter subject to Sir David Dalrymple in 1763 (*Letters of B.*, 1. 41), and evidently kept the project in mind for some time, since in August 1765 he asked Wilkes to sign his letters and seal them so that the writing would not be torn (*Letters of B.*, 1. 84).

habits. He wrote to his friend William Temple in 1767, "I am always for fixing some period for my perfection, as far as possible. Let it be when my *Account of Corsica* is published; I shall then have a character which I must support."[27] Corsica had not the hoped-for effect.[28] Between this period and 1777 Boswell wrote a number of short papers, and projected any number of longer works,[29] but he found that he "could not fix," and had difficulty in settling to his writing.[30] He learned from his indecision that he could accomplish nothing unless he could be constant to a design for a considerable time, irrespective of moods, flagging interest, and the calls of duty and pleasure. A singular silence covers his resolution to assign himself a task he could not avoid; but at some time in the early part of 1777 he must have made arrangements with his own magazine to publish a series of monthly essays under a definite title. The moral discipline which underlay the mental is suggested by Boswell's retention of his old title of *Hypochondriack;* but it is clearly seen only when the essays are studied in connection with Boswell's letters and other works. Such an analysis, however brief, will answer the question of his biographer, Mr. Fitzgerald: "What was the mystery, or meaning of his system?"[31]

In almost every essay we find some familiar much-debated topic. Sometimes the subject is one common to eighteenth-century society in general, but very frequently it is a topic which applies to Boswell's own affairs, and which we know he discussed at length with his intimates. Among the common or impersonal subjects, Boswell seems to find satisfaction in simply clarifying his thoughts and making a confession of faith regarding opinions which he feels to be indubitably sound. Upon luxury, war, irreverence, subordination, education, tradition, and gentility he takes a stand which seems familiar to us because we have known him to announce the same principles elsewhere; in the same way he maintains his belief in spirits and prophetic dreams, and defends experience contrasted to theory, or the contemporary age con-

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[27] *Letters of B.*, 1. 137.

[28] See letters to Temple, 1767–68.

[29] See *Hebr.*, pp. 33, 104 ff.; *Life of J.*, 1. 19 n. 1, 261; 2. 511; 3. 91, 184; *Letters of B.*, 1. 218, 234, 245, 260; 2. 280 n. 2.

[30] *Letters of B.*, 1. 215, 218.

[31] Fitzgerald, *Life of B.*, 2. 225.

trasted to the past. All this is set down with brisk assurance, and without any suggestion of concealment or of inner debate. The papers dealing with Boswell's intimate problems are written very differently. The subject-matter is frequently extended beyond the limits assigned to the other topics,[32] and the problem involved is occasionally argued out before the reader. The pronouncements are not at all what we should expect from Boswell, and yet they are made in as earnest and positive a tone as any of the familiar convictions repeated in the impersonal essays. When they do have a faintly familiar ring, we find on examination that it is because *The Hypochondriack* is presenting with emphasis an opinion which Boswell had timidly thrown out to destruction in conversation with Johnson, or had elsewhere suggested, half-mirthfully, as something beyond human attainment. Such restatement, with such new assurance, is striking, but more important than all is the fact that Boswell not only supports standards of conduct opposed to his own mental and physical habits, but deliberately holds up his own defects as examples of weakness to be avoided.

Of these, the one which Boswell everywhere deplores most frequently is a lack of reserve and dignity. In his letters, the *Life of Johnson,* and the *Tour to the Hebrides,* he makes candid admission that his animal spirits too often overcame his judgment, and that talkativeness and a love of ridicule were his besetting sins.[33] His ideal of manhood always included a refined, balanced intellectual development, and he seems to have been oppressed by the realization that his frivolous or sensual impulses were "unsuitable to such a character." Throughout the essays he emphasizes his ideal, and treats the departure from it with regretful severity. In the essay on reserve (*Hyp.* 23)[34] he speaks of talkativeness as a

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[32] See especially the three or more essays on hypochondria; the fear of death; drinking; love; marriage; country life; the three allied essays on prudence, reserve, and ridicule; and three, also loosely linked, on penuriousness, the use of wealth, and hospitality. These cover Boswell's chief difficulties. No other topics are so thoroughly developed.

[33] Parallels showing these and following points will be found in the notes appended to the essays cited here.

[34] See also *Hyp.* 26, 32. In these essays Boswell uses with serious brevity figures which he presents in *Boswelliana* with genial humor. The change of tone

misfortune "due to an extreme degree of inattention and carelessness from not being habituated to any kind of correction," and accents the childish quality of the mind that must vent all it thinks in speech. The dangers of raillery "unrestrained by reason" he points out both in this essay and in the one on ridicule (*Hyp.* 62), where irrepressible joking is characterized as "a sort of mental drunkenness," which prevents the "grave enjoyments of study, esteem, and admiration." We might take these passages for criticisms of Goldsmith's failings, were it not that the essay on ridicule includes a thinly disguised paraphrase of Johnson's admonitions to Boswell himself on the subject, and several close and convincing parallels to Boswell's own remarks upon his faults in other writings.

His sincere desire to find joy in the pleasures of mind rather than in those of the senses is as distinct in *The Hypochondriack* as it was on that famous occasion when he went dinnerless in order to converse with Dr. Johnson. His most emphatic expressions of the superior joys of intellect occur throughout those essays in which he contrasts the mental or spiritual richness of sophisticated maturity with the sensual barrenness of youth or ignorance.[35] The distinction is repeated in more general terms in the essay on pleasure (*Hyp.* 40), and again, forms the basis for the essay on prudence, in which Boswell shows that habits of reflection and thoughtful restraint are the only foundation for satisfactory activity (*Hyp.* 44). He devotes an entire paper to the subject of thinking, coming to the conclusion that thought is "our greatest blessing" (*Hyp.* 26); in another context he refers to it as the chief charm of civilization (*Hyp.* 36). His theory of enjoyment demands, as a first requirement, a clear consciousness of whatever

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is important, but even more striking is the duplication of material; it shows that Boswell had been thinking about his defects for a considerable time. See *Boswell's Note-books, Journals, and Letters*, pp. 59–60.

[35] *Hyp.* 9, 10, 15, 20, 42, 46, 59. It is noteworthy also that spiritual pleasure is exalted above sensual in the essay on ridicule, in which Boswell directs so many reproofs at himself (*Hyp.* 62). A poignant expression in one of his letters to Temple, written only four years before he died, shows that Boswell was always conscious of his own lapses into the sensual excesses of his youth (*Letters of B.*, 2. 432):

> The possibility of a disturbed imagination reducing me to the mode of existence in my youth frightens me. Alas! What real advances have I made above that state?

experience he is passing through (*Hyp.* 48); and an idea analogous to this, which occurs repeatedly in the essays, is quite evidently to Boswell the climax of his opinions about mental activity: better a conscious, or thinking mind, with all the terrors which thinking sometimes brings, than tranquillity without comprehension or imagination (*Hyp.* 14, 15, 26, and *passim*). Connected to these views on intellectual delight are Boswell's remarks upon learning (especially the solid learning embodied in the classics), in the essay devoted to the subject (*Hyp.* 50). He recommends it to the sufferer from hypochondria as "exceedingly advantageous," on the score that it "affords salutary food to his faculties, and prevents them from raging ravenously abroad, or secretly gnawing and preying upon the soul itself, and that it gradually strengthens and gives a firm tone to the mind." The application to his own case which Boswell was making under the cover of these generalities is obvious when we realize that the arguments which he gives in favor of solid learning are probably those employed by Lord Auchinleck and Dr. Johnson to chide him for desultory reading. We know that he criticized himself for this particular sin.[36] Indeed, in a letter to Temple, he hints that one of his purposes in writing *The Hypochondriack* was to stimulate in himself the studious habits which he is here advising for victims of the spleen.[37]

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[36] Lord Auchinleck's counsel is represented in the essay itself. Dr. Johnson's is recorded only in letters from Boswell to his friend Temple, written in the spring of 1775—the result of conversations between Boswell and Johnson during one of Boswell's visits to London. On March 18 he wrote, "I am afraid I have not read books enough to be able to talk from them. . . . . I have a kind of impotency of study" (an evident reflection of some reproof). On May 17 and 22 he reported that he had promised Dr. Johnson to keep an account of his reading on his return to Scotland, and that the Doctor's chief suggestion of cure for Boswell's hypochondria was for him to "read more and drink less." (*Letters of B.*, 1. 214, 224, 226.) These remarks do not appear in the *Life* at all; Boswell gives but a brief résumé of the talk upon the subject (*Life of J.*, 2. 413). For Boswell's criticisms of himself see further, *Letters of B.*, 1. 239; 2. 304–5.

[37] A letter of January 1780:

I wish I could give you any satisfactory account of my studies. I have done little at Greek. Lord Monboddo's *Ancient Metaphysicks,* which I am reading carefully, helps me to recover that language. But he is not an agreeable writer. His conversation is full of learning, but by much too odd and positive, and *acharné* againſt modern manners. I really think my *Hypochondriack* goes on wonderfully well. But how inconsiderable are both you

Other advice to sufferers which conceals a self-reproach is the passage on the wretched inertia of hypochondriacs, in one of the earliest essays on the disease (*Hyp.* 6). It is developed, with little change in idea, and with great feeling, from a letter written by Boswell to Garrick, in which he deplores his own indolence in correspondence. The chief difference between the two passages is that the letter has a tone of puzzled incapacity to understand the cause of such torpor, whereas the essay, passing over the causes as inexplicable, puts all the emphasis on the tortures of regret which inaction inevitably produces. Through most of the essays which mention love (*Hyp.* 4, 11, 13), hypochondriacs are warned (by references which the student of Boswell recognizes instantly as personal)[38] that since their distemper allows them to feel only the violent emotions of this passion, they must flee from it, or else scatter their attentions. In another case, we know that Boswell once listened to the history of a poet's bad habits "with the eagerness of one who . . . . is glad to hear that a man of . . . . genius and learning" had propensities as weak as his own;[39] yet in the essay on imitation (*Hyp.* 35) there appears the exact opposite of this attitude, expressed in earnest terms which Boswell had first learned from Johnson: "We are apt to indulge ourselves in immoralities which we find the world disposed to overlook in eminent men, without reflecting that we have not the great qualities by which such vices are counterbalanced; and that even if it were so, the eminence of character which we admire is to a certain degree diminished and stained by them."

Another reminiscence of stern Johnsonian counsel runs through the essay on pity (*Hyp.* 29), in which the hypochondriac is ad-

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and I in comparison with what we used to hope we should be. Yet your learning, and your *Memoirs* set you far above the common run of educated men. . . . . I, too, in several respects have attained to superiority. But we both want solidity and force of mind, such as we observe in those who rise in active life. (*Letters of B.*, 2. 301.)

No positive proof of my point exists here, but the offhand fashion in which Boswell alludes to the essays in connection with his studies and his desire to attain force of mind seems to me to indicate that between Temple and himself *The Hypochondriack* was understood to be a means of supporting Boswell's efforts to improve and keep up his reading.

[38] See *Letters of B.*, 1. 135; the whole episode of Zélide as revealed in his correspondence; and *passim*.

[39] *Hebr.*, 178.

vised, as Boswell was advised, that a search for sympathy merely exposes him as a weakling, "an object of disgust." The concluding paragraph shows Boswell an unsparing critic of this weakness of his, censuring the dependence of spirit which he showed elsewhere so often—in his complaining letters to Sir David Dalrymple and his friend Temple; his strolls with a gentleman at Utrecht "in rather a dreary frame";[40] his correspondence and conversations with Rousseau and Wilkes, with DeLeyre (of whom he wrote to Rousseau, "*Il me montroit de la mélancholie. Il m'en étoit cher*").[41] It is noteworthy that he turned away from all these people who sympathized with him, and clung to the dicta of Johnson, who did *not*. There can be nothing in all this of extenuation or hypocrisy. He is trying to attain that "great art," the "management of the mind," of which Dr. Johnson and General Paoli spoke to him so much,[42] and which he himself asserts in the essay on thinking (*Hyp.* 26) to be the chief aim of education.

On some subjects Boswell was not able to make up his mind without extended argument; chief of these are marriage, drinking, money-saving, and country life, matters which in his own existence were a constant source of uneasiness to him. The essays on these topics show Boswell in the attempt to fix a rational and admirable standard of conduct, and usually succeeding.

In his third essay on love (*Hyp.* 13), he contrasts the rapture of courtship and the tranquillity of married kindness, giving the palm to marriage, but only for a settled complacency, and quoting a French poet to illustrate his idea that love cannot survive the wedding very long. He adds that a feigned continuance of love is improper, and that a business-like marriage would result in fewer disappointments than a marriage to gratify passion. In the same essay, and in number 46, he insists that cool reflection would preclude both marriage and the birth of children because of the responsibilities entailed. However, in the three essays on marriage (*Hyp.* 41–43) his tone is entirely different; he speaks without sympathy of the "selfish disadvantages which cool judgement

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[40] *Hyp.* 13.

[41] *Letters of B.*, 1. 77. For Boswell's efforts to talk to Johnson on the subject of his moods, see *Life of J.*, Index, under Boswell—*hypochondria*.

[42] *Life of J.*, 1. 517; 2. 485, 504; 3. 99, 471, 474; 4. 437.

may discover in the connubial engagement," and proceeds to state the case for marriage in glowing terms. Marriage deserves respect because it establishes order and gives man the pleasure of feeling himself a part of the ordered system of life; the friendly bonds of marriage gratify the love of permanency; it is so good an institution that any misery occasioned within it is the fault only of the persons concerned; love and its gratification being the first reason for marriage, *attention to any other interest precludes the result of real marriage.* In the second paper on the topic, he expresses the hope that a "celestial intimacy" developed from wedded love in this life "may subsist in a higher state of perfection in the life everlasting." In the third essay on marriage, he even repeats the cynical quotation which he had employed in his paper on love, for the purpose of defeating it and asserting what he had there so volubly denied—that if love is fostered and assisted to progress after marriage, people "may enjoy I believe as much happiness as is consistent with the imperfection of our present state of being." It is in this essay too that Boswell gives the intimate details of his own whimsical courtship, and boasts of the contented union that resulted from it.

But it is evident in the essays, as it is elsewhere in Boswell's writing, that his own conduct in marriage was far from exemplary; he had good reason to celebrate, as he does in this last paper on marriage, *good temper* as "the most essential requisite in the character of an agreeable wife." It is to be remembered that he had been married for nine years when he wrote the essays on love which more or less depreciate marriage; and in this essay which praises the "connubial engagement" so highly there are warnings as to infidelity in marriage with indubitable evidence that he was writing as usual from experience. He speaks of "endeavoring to argue for occasional and transient amorous connections,"[43] and repeats the just rebuke he received for it from an old friend; in the last paragraphs of the essay we find a sincere castigation of Boswell's gallant proclivities, and the generous admission that wives are right to refuse their kindness on occasion to husbands who have loose habits—a reference which we know to

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[43] *Hyp.* 43. Boswell was always falling into "transient amorous connections." See *Letters of B.*, *passim*, and for arguments on the subject, 1. 215, 226.

be personal, however oblique, because it parallels certain conversations Boswell held with Johnson on this aspect of his affairs.[44] The essay concludes with the translation of a letter by Cardinal Bembo on marital infidelity, with a note that the original was found accidentally by "a certain gentleman," who took the discovery as a reproof leveled at his guilty head by Providence. The gentleman is almost certainly Boswell himself—the tendency to see the hand of God in coincidence is characteristic of him, and he is on this occasion so careless of his disguise as to remark that the long translation came from his own hand. Throughout these passages, Boswell's tone is that of a man admitting his faults and welcoming the correction which he here sets down. More, he reiterates firmly the opinion which he offered to Johnson, that there should be a single standard of conduct for husband and wife. This is worthy of note, since he stood almost alone in the society of his day on the point; even Dr. Johnson asserted that unfaithfulness was a crime only on the side of the wife.[45]

The essays on drinking (*Hyp.* 30–33) Boswell begins on a note of nervous apprehension lest he should be too lenient with himself, and he speaks with unconsciously ironic pathos of the restraints of "reason and religion," without which he would be "as constant a votary of Bacchus as any man." In the first two essays he gives all the arguments possible to support indulgence in drinking, but in the third he voices his disapproval of all ordered drinking, such as toasts and bumpers, and of the false notions of gallantry and hospitality which produced drunkenness so frequently in his day; he concludes the paper by "retracting and renouncing" any remarks which might lead his readers to think that he advocated anything but "the innocent gaiety of drinking." The fourth essay deals with the effects of drunkenness, giving instances quite as impressive in their concrete terrors as any advocate of temperance could desire, and denies any "supposed symptoms of virtue which have been ascribed to it."[46] This

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[44] For this and the following points see *Hyp.* 43 and notes.

[45] *Life of J.*, 2. 63, 523; 3. 462.

[46] In his *Boswelliana*, Boswell does ascribe to drinking the virtue of warming the cold hearts of northern nations; his letters bear out the decision of the essays, however. "My present misfortune is occasioned by drinking," he wrote to

from Boswell, whose chief weakness is so well known as to need no references in evidence, calls for genuine compassion, and points out the purpose of his periodical distinctly. It is important to observe that this subject, with the exception of hypochondria, is the only one to occupy more than three essays.

Upon the subjects of parsimony and country life, Boswell did not reach so firm a decision, chiefly, I think, because he felt that the cause for criticism in himself was not so serious in these as in the particulars I have just discussed. He could never be certain whether or not saving was penuriousness. He could not save, but he evidently hated to spend, at times, and could not be sure that his feeling was virtuous. He speaks in a letter of his "old passion for gold," and admits in the *Life of Johnson* that he was "occasionally troubled by a fit of narrowness."[47] *The Hypochondriack* on penuriousness (number 56) pictures this wavering in most unsympathetic terms; Boswell goes so far as to show how it would make good comedy, and sketches a scene in a few nimble sentences. However, the essay following, on wealth, offers all possible arguments for saving; Boswell insists, nevertheless, that its ends shall be only rational and dignified provision, entertainment, and benevolence. In the course of the paper he uses a figure which he first developed in his *Boswelliana*,[48] and which shows that he served as his own model in the criticisms that he leveled at his only national trait. The essay following that on wealth deals with hospitality (*Hyp.* 58), the most universally pleasing use of riches, and ends the little debate in a glow of good feeling over the conquest of an unworthy passion.

The whole question of country living was subject for continual debate in the household at Auchinleck, and for any number of letters and conversations between Boswell and Johnson. Throughout his life, Boswell was reminded on all sides that as the eldest son of his house, he was doomed to be a Scottish country gentleman, but—though he did derive pleasure from considering himself as something of a feudal lord—he was personally of the

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Temple in 1768; "perhaps the coldness of the Scots requires it, but my fiery blood is turned to madness by it." (*Letters of B.*, 1. 169.)

[47] *Letters of B.*, 1. 25, 165; *Life of J.*, 4. 220.

[48] See parallels in notes to *Hyp.* 57.

opposite conviction. True to his chief ideal, that of intellectual perfection, he persisted in yearning for the life of English cities, where the mind could expand before a variety of stimulating experiences. The essays on country life show the conflict between these two opinions going on in Boswell's mind. The first (*Hyp.* 36) reveals him in the effort to make the most of the retired existence, evidently in obedience to the demands of his father, the hints of his good brother, and the frequent advice of Dr. Johnson;[49] it gives a laborious defense of life in the country as the original state of man, and quotes from half a dozen poets to show the enjoyments to be expected there; Boswell even offers in evidence his own pleasant experiences in the country. By the time he was ready to write the next paper, these dutiful ideas had become hopelessly unattractive, and after a prefatory remark that country life cannot be examined too closely for fear of dulness, Boswell fills the last essays on the subject (*Hyp.* 37, 38) with an enumeration of all the charms that the country lacks, and an earnest recommendation of every device which can mitigate the tedium of a stay there! His chief comfort is the reflection that "on this side the grave there will ever be imperfection."

In all of these arguments, as in the directly stated opinions and warnings, I am not able to discover that Boswell is extenuating his defects or covering them with an ingenious hypocritical mask. It is true that on occasion he supports a theory which seems at present credulous or worldly, such as his avowal of superstition or his very moderate idea of charity; it is true also that we can detect self-pity in his sympathy for the misunderstood person of "sensibility" and the son reduced to "sad living" by the harsh measures of a stern father.[50] But any student of Boswell's life and times realizes how much there is to be said for his stand on these lesser particulars, and certainly, in the rare instances where Boswell cannot adapt his point of view entirely to that of his pastors and masters, he sticks to his guns with a fervor that does much to rout any suspicion of hypocrisy. He never continuously upholds anything which did not seem to him excellent and rational. His

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[49] See notes to this and the two following essays; *Letters of B.*, 1. 235, 240, 243; 2. 351, 374, 416, 462.

[50] See *Hyp.* 9, 37, 39, 45, 46, and notes.

tone throughout is that of the man in search of virtuous standards, and for the most part he makes his own infirmities the contrast by which to emphasize the ideal of consistency and dignity which he sets forth.

It is futile to argue that this persistent accent upon virtuous action was insincere because Boswell's practice did not agree with it, or that he was attempting to deceive the world by using an impersonal phrasing in speaking of his defects, and offering his theoretical morality as a blind. The fact remains that the defects are all set forth without mercy, however covertly; the very secrecy of the chastisement argues a dogged earnestness and decent shame with which Boswell has not often been credited. The anonymity of the papers precludes the belief that he was making an effort to deceive while *The Hypochondriack* appeared month by month; had he published the essays in book form, under his own name, he could not have hoped to befool a world that knew his vices so much better than his virtues. All this, however, is proof negative.

In the essays themselves we find proof positive of Boswell's sincere motive. He says in the concluding number,

> There must not be too positive expectations entertained of finding a similarity between an author's conversation and his writings. . . . . He may be an impostor, so as to have been assuming the appearance of virtuous or amiable qualities which he no more possesses, than a player does many of the characters, which he represents upon the stage with a vivacity of deception. . . . . Indeed, there is nothing more delusive than the supposed character of an author, from reading his compositions.[51]

This would be strange language from a man who was attempting to hoodwink his public. It is, as a matter of fact, another touch of conscience, a shamefaced preface to what follows:

> For myself, I cannot perfectly judge of my manner, which I have no doubt must vary with the fluctuation of my spirits. Nor can I boast that my practice is uniformly what it should be. But I am absolutely certain that in these papers my principles are most sincerely expressed.

This cheerful disconnection of principle from practice Boswell had learned from Dr. Johnson. Yet Boswell, unlike his mentor,

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[51] *Hyp.* 70. This persuasion that one's character as author and as man could be kept distinct is constant in Boswell's mind; see n. 14 above.

was unwilling to express good principle and let it serve as excuse for loose habits.[52] In the first essay on religion (*Hyp.* 54), he shows clearly that his conception of the relationship between principle and practice is a constructive one:

> Whatever some cold, hard-minded, positive disputants have maintained, I have no doubt that good principles are often found in the same person with occasional bad practice. . . . . Where there are really good principles, there is hope that good practice will in time be uniform. . . . . Hypocrisy is indeed detestable; but an acquaintance with life, or even a fair examination of our own belief and conduct, will teach us to distinguish it from inconstancy. Far be it from me to encourage myself or others in the pernicious notion that good principles will atone for deliberate bad practice; and that conscience may safely be soothed by balancing faith against immorality. . . . . If [a man] be clearly conscious of the integrity of his principles, let him be ever striving to have his practice as good as he can . . . . considering that the more honest good there is in his life, the proportion of evil will be the less, and good may at length predominate; while in the mean time the world ought and perhaps will be just enough to allow him credit for what merit he has. We should let our light shine before men such as it is, though it be but glimmering and flashy, hoping it may become steady and bright.

The most important evidence, however, lies in Boswell's direct statements concerning discipline. The essay on reserve (*Hyp.* 23), which is from beginning to end a criticism of Boswell's own frivolity, contains an impersonal paraphrase of certain reforms which Boswell had outlined for himself in a letter of 1767 to Temple; the passage concludes with the unmistakably sincere statement,

> I own I have a respect for every kind of discipline, for every mode which men more intellectual than corporeal have invented for bringing human nature to a state of greater perfection in any particular.

In the sanguine salad days of 1767 Boswell had thought it intel-

[52] *Life of J.*, 1. 484; 3. 276; 4. 457; *Hebr.*, 239, 409; *Letters of J.*, 2. 234. Boswell was aware that Johnson pushed the division too far; he says in a letter to Temple in 1790 (*Letters of B.*, 2. 400):

> In truth I am sensible that I do not sufficiently "try my ways" as the Psalmist says, and am even almost inclined to think with you that my great Oracle, Johnson, *did* allow too much credit to good principles without good practice.

See also *Hyp.* 44 n. 9.

lectual discipline to support the character established for him by his *Account of Corsica,* but by 1777 he had learned that perfection could not be attained at one stroke or by means of any mere example or ideal. He realized that he could improve *some* of his loose behavior only by the slow method of fixing good habits through his own continued efforts. It is somewhat sad, but wholly inspiriting, to observe with what deliberate middle-aged caution he states the fact in his essay on change (*Hyp.* 64):

> That some men are born with more ſteadiness of mind than others cannot be denied. Yet, I believe, it is much in our power to cure inconſtancy by resolutely watching its beginnings, and reſiſting them, till a habit of ſtability is formed. Let this be an object of ambition, both in the view of present advantage, and in the proſpect of being fitted for a better ſtate of being. . . . .

For Boswell's volatile temperament, the composition of periodical papers, required at fixed intervals, served as intellectual stimulus and regulation, both. Twice at least in *The Hypochondriack* he points out how he used the series to "cure inconstancy by resolutely watching its beginnings and resisting them." In the thirty-ninth essay he tells his readers that he was forcing himself to write the paper, since he was at the time suffering from the uneasy inertia of the hypochondriac. In the seventieth, he concludes the series by a brief sketch of his hopes and fears as a periodical author, describing his methods of writing, and their effect upon his mind, in these significant terms:

> Be [the essays] what they may, I should not have written them had I not been urged on by the obligation of a monthly task which I imposed upon myself. For except the firſt number, and the four which I mention as written several years ago, all of them were composed while the hour of publication was so near, that I had juſt time enough to do them with rapid agitation. . . . . There is a pleasure, when one is indolent, to think that a task, to the performance of which one has been again and again subjected, and had some difficulty to make it out, is no longer to be required. But this pleasure, or rather comfort, does not laſt. For we soon feel a degree of uneasy languor, not merely in being without a ſtated exercise, but in being void of the usual consciousness of its regular returns, by which the mind has been agreeably braced.

It is not impossible that Boswell undertook *The Hypochondriack* as an "invention" to bring his all too human "nature to a

state of greater perfection" because of the example set by Steele in his publication of *The Christian Hero*. Boswell knew the work; he records in the *Life of Johnson* for 1776,[53] "I mentioned Sir Richard Steele having published his *Christian Hero* with the avowed purpose of obliging himself to lead a religious life; yet, that his conduct was by no means strictly suitable." Steele's expression of his purpose and his methods in accomplishing it, in his *Apology for Himself and His Writings*, seems almost like a candid statement of that plan which is shadowed forth in the hints and suggestions of Boswell's essays:

> Being thoroughly convinced of many things of which he often repented, and which he often repeated, he writ, for his own private use, a little book called the *Chriſtian Hero*, with a design principally to fix upon his own mind a ſtrong impreſſion of virtue and religion in oppoſition to a ſtronger propenſity towards unwarrantable pleaſures. This ſecret admonition was too weak; he therefore printed the book with his name, in hopes that a ſtanding teſtimony againſt himſelf, and the eyes of the world . . . . upon him in a new light, might curb his deſires, and make him aſhamed of underſtanding and ſeeming to feel what was virtuous, and living quite ſo contrary a life.

I think that Boswell intended to follow the same scheme, that the anonymous essays were his first secret effort, and that the publication in book form, which he suggests in the concluding paper, was to be the standing testimony.

The stratagem seems to the sympathetic observer almost pitiful, knowing as we do how this "scheme for getting through this strange existence" failed, like the others. The difficulty was that, however Boswell's reasoning showed him the benefits of serene and prudent behavior, he himself, like most mercurial spirits, felt only half alive in a state of placidity; it is clear from his letters that although he found relief now and then in a quiet interval, he did not relish it.[54] What he really craved was a variety of stimulating experiences, and a continuously alert sensitiveness where-

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[53] *Life of J.*, 2. 513.

[54] See *Letters of B.*, 2. 301:

> My mind is at present in a ſtate of tranquillity, or rather good inſenſibility. I have neither elevation nor gaiety; but I am eaſy.

See also *Boswelliana*, 283.

with to enjoy them.[55] In his youth he had attempted to follow the dictates of his nature in such exciting spheres of action as the army and the stage,[56] but before he was twenty-three—shocked at his own rebellion against the precedents of his family and his caste, and anxious to please that scornful aristocrat, his father—he had begun the long effort to become what he was not, which he maintained throughout his irregular and disappointed life, and of which *The Hypochondriack* is a part. The audience which owes the *Life of Johnson* to Boswell's unconquered vivacity, rendered productive through his self-imposed discipline, is wanting in sympathy when it accepts the accusation that he assumed in these essays a mask of hypocrisy. Or is it merely a dull audience, unable to distinguish between a mask and a uniform? He was, although he never became a military man, enrolled in a noble army. We may moralize from our heights of superior virtue upon his failure to keep the faith, but we must be "just enough to allow him credit" for fighting the good fight.

As these volumes go to press, I am informed by Dr. Tinker and Dr. Pottle that Colonel Isham, of 969 Fifth Avenue, New York, has become possessor of the first forty numbers of *The Hypochondriack* as prepared by Boswell for book publication. The occasional corrections, substitutions, and additions, in Boswell's own hand, are in the nature of the *errata* added in the original printing and listed in the notes to the essays here.

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[55] See *Hyp.* 48 and notes.

[56] See *Hyp.* 3 and notes.

II. BOSWELL AS ESSAYIST

I. HIS TREATMENT OF HIS SOURCES

BOSWELL'S READING

In 1776 Dr. Johnson sent Boswell some boxes of books, thereby performing an act of complacent benevolence, weeding out his own library, and discharging a debt which he had owed his friend since the tour to the Hebrides in 1773. He was exceedingly displeased when he discovered that Boswell had been dilatory about even opening the boxes, and chided him for "managing himself so ill." It is obvious from remarks in the essays that Boswell's father likewise was suggesting studies or methods of reading to him from time to time. From such evidences as these, and from certain laments on the part of Boswell himself,[1] one might gather that the author of *The Hypochondriack* perhaps bought few books for himself and had little desire to read. On the contrary, the essays themselves show us that Boswell had a respectable library, and made use of it with considerable pleasure, his difficulty being that his tastes were not uniformly those of his various mentors.[2] This divergence is one of the things that makes Boswell an arresting figure in the history of literature and criticism. He is distinctly representative of the transition period between the standardized, backward-looking Augustan age, and the consciously advancing, expansive (not to say loose) age of the romantics; nowhere is he more so than in his habits of reading. He had been well trained in the classic tradition, and he had what appears to the unerudite twentieth century a remarkably easy familiarity with the ancient authors beloved of his father, Dr.

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[1] *Life of J.*, 3. 99, 219. Cf. *Hyp.* 50 and the discussion of it in "The 'Secret History' of the Series," and my notes on Boswell's studies in old Scottish documents, in *Boswell's Notebooks, Journals, and Letters.* See also *Letters of B.*, 1. 214, 224, 226, 239; 2. 301, 304–5.

[2] Such a statement does not imply that Boswell's tastes were generally inferior. One remembers that when he did open the boxes which Johnson had sent him, he criticized the collection as a "truly numerous and miscellaneous stall library thrown together at random" (*Life of J.*, 3. 104), and took no further notice of the books.

It is true that he felt his tastes to be inferior, however. See the discussion of his attitude toward learning in "The 'Secret History' of the Series," above.

Johnson, and the other Augustans; but he had also an intense interest and great faith in the work of modern writers, and obviously could not resist the eager desire to be known as a connoisseur of current literature.

In *The Hypochondriack* there is ample evidence that Boswell was conversant with the works of Greek and Roman poets, philosophers, and historians. He makes frequent references to Homer; to Aristotle, who "unlocks science to all who wish to learn"; the "divine" Plato; Seneca; Lucretius, "ingenious and just," in spite of his "false and hurtful" qualities; Cicero, "upon whose mind the advancing rays of celestial philosophy beamed with a brightness very admirable in a pagan period of time"; Ovid; and the favorite Horace. Whole essays are developed from Boswell's reflections upon passages from Xenophon, from Quintilian, from Persius, Suetonius, Sallust, Aulus Gellius. Aside from these, he had read, in Latin, St. Jerome; Erasmus on *Preparing for Death*—"an excellent performance of that great man," which Boswell had "long thought of translating into English"; the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis; and various works by less famous writers. Occasionally he picked up some curiosity such as one of Bembo's Latin letters, the *De Animi Tranquillitate Dialogus* of Wilson, the *De Litteratorum Infelicitate* of Joannes Pierius Valerianus, or the compilation by "the learned Crenius" entitled *Consilia et Studiorum Methodus*. Not a single essay passes without several references to writers well tried by time; of the apt and elegant mottoes which head the papers, almost all are Latin or Greek; always Boswell has the fine compression of a classic phrase at his tongue's tip, to make an idea immediately vivid, or to enrich a sentence.

However, in spite of his friendly intimacy with the masters in the dead languages, it is clear that Boswell's chief delight lay elsewhere;[3] with the exception of Horace, the works which he cites most often are modern. By far the largest number of his

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[3] In this connection see *Hyp.* 52, in which Boswell defends the age in which he lived, in opposition to the past. One of his chief reasons for believing that the world was "in a progressive state of improvement" is that a general diffusion of knowledge by means of newspapers and magazines had taken the place of classic learning, which had fallen into decay.

quotations are taken from the King James version of the Bible,[4] the plays of Shakespeare, and the works of Pope. Less frequent, but still surprisingly numerous, are the allusions to other modern writings; these assume a special significance when we realize that many of the contemporary authors whom Boswell mentions with pleasure and respect were men whom Dr. Johnson ignored or derided.

In the essay on reserve (*Hyp.* 23) Boswell quotes Shenstone with approbation, although when, in 1773, he had asserted that Shenstone had "some power of thinking, ... Dr. Johnson would not allow him that merit."[5] Francis Osborne is quoted twice as a writer of lively shrewdness,[6] though Johnson dismissed him as "a conceited fellow," at whom the boys themselves would throw stones.[7] It is notable that *The Hypochondriack* has no allusion whatever to Johnson's beloved Richardson or to any of his works; whereas Fielding, whom Johnson called a "blockhead" and a "barren rascal," whose *Tom Jones* was a "corrupt work,"[8] is referred to half a dozen times, and always with enjoyment. Indeed, Boswell stoutly asserts in the fifth essay the opinion which he could but suggest before the Doctor—that Fielding was "famed for humour and practical knowledge of life in its most active scene." The "pious Hervey" is twice introduced with respect, in spite of the parody which Johnson made upon his works during the Hebridean tour; the same feeling marks Boswell's allusions to Mason, Gray, Flatman, Whitehead, and Home, all of whom Johnson despised; Hamilton of Bangour, whose Scottish rhyme-schemes had moved Johnson to immoderate laughter, is applauded as "a genuine poetical genius."[9] In the *Life*, Boswell

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[4] It is noteworthy that most of his references are made to the Psalms and the New Testament. I emphasize Boswell's frequent use of the English Bible because he so evidently admired Dr. Johnson's use of a Greek text; see *Life of J.*, 1. 84, n. 2; 2. 218, 244, 330.

[5] *Hebr.*, 304.

[6] For this and other definite references by name, see Index, and parallels in the notes to the essays in which they occur.

[7] *Life of J.*, 2. 222.

[8] *Ibid.*, 2. 199, 200 n. 1.

[9] For Johnson's parody, see *Hebr.*, 400; for his mirth on the subject of Hamilton, see *Life of J.*, 3. 170–71.

was frequently obliged to assume a defensive attitude toward his favorites, but in the essays he cites them boldly, offering their ideas as authority for his own.[10]

Other contemporary or nearly contemporary authors whom Boswell quotes were not so notably topics for controversy with Johnson. Among these are the poets Young, Thomson, Prior, Parnell, Green, Armstrong, Blair, and various anonymous gentlemen represented in Dodsley's collection and the magazines. Boswell makes affectionately familiar reference to the dramatists from Farquhar and Vanbrugh to Sheridan, Macklin, Hughes, and Murphy. In philosophy he ranges from Kenelm Digby, Robert Filmer, Bolingbroke, and the "shrewd, lively, and entertaining but dangerous" Mandeville, to Berkeley and Locke. He is familiar with the historical works of Robertson, Gibbon, and Hume; he makes easy allusions to the studies in language and esthetics made by Burke, Kames, and Monboddo. He knows Milton's works well; he refers to obscure compositions of Sir Walter Raleigh. He is conversant not only with the essays of Bacon and Sir William Temple, and such famous collections as *The Spectator* and *The Rambler,* but he watches the magazine writing of his own day as well, and copies bits from it into his "collections of good things," or transfers passages direct to his essays. Occasionally we find, buried in *The Hypochondriack,* a quotation from some ephemeral work of which we might never have heard otherwise, such as the anonymous *Shamrock, or Hibernian Cresses,* a collection of Irish verse in which Boswell found the only description that he ever saw of the distressing effects of drunkenness. Among continental writers, Boswell quotes most often from the essays of Montaigne and the works of Rousseau,[11] but he refers also to such important figures as Dante, Molière, Fénelon, Voltaire, Cervantes, and Le Sage. It is evident that he had writings

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[10] Or asserting them without reference as accepted truths; see pp. 32–44.

[11] Whom, it will be remembered, Johnson scorned as a bad man who talked nonsense only too well (*Life of J.*, 2. 12–14). Boswell seems to have been particularly fond of the *Nouvelle Héloïse;* he quotes it more than any other work of Rousseau. Boswell had defended the novel somewhat feebly before Johnson as a book written with good intentions, whatever its harmful effect; the respect with which he treats it in the essays is another proof of the independent judgments to be found in *The Hypochondriack.*

of lesser consequence sent to him from the continent now and again; in the first essay he informs his readers that he has "looked into the late writings of foreigners," naming especially the letters of Madame de Pompadour (spurious, unfortunately!) and a composition by "Groslet, a late traveller"; in the sixty-third he makes easy reference to a work which he "lately got from France." Aside from these, Boswell cites a number of contemporary or near-contemporary European writings which in all probability he picked up during his travels on the continent, by authors now forgotten—Baudier, Vertot, Venette, Catts, Mencke, Lafitau, Beccaria, di Marco, and so on.

It is only to be expected that the essays should contain a number of references to works on hypochondria, but Boswell seems actually to have begun the collection of a library on the subject. Among his authorities are Dr. Battie's *Treatise on Madness* ("a book sufficiently corporeal"), a discourse by Hippocrates *Concerning Madness*, Claude Revillon's *Affections Hypocondriaques*, James Robe's *Counsels and Comforts to Troubled Christians, ... with Treaties on Melancholly by different Writers, subjoined*, Nichols's *Oratio de Anima Medica*, and Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.[12]

The works named in the foregoing paragraphs do not by any means exhaust the sum of Boswell's reading. The index must be relied upon to supply the list as fully as *The Hypochondriack* suggests it, since my brief survey can give none but the major prophets, as it were. Certainly the rich store of allusion with which Boswell began his task as essayist should have justified his authorship in his own eyes, insistent as he was upon wide reading as a preparation for composition.[13] He continued to read in connection with the essays throughout the whole course of *The Hypochondriack*, as the papers themselves show. Yet in the end,

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[12] The works of Nichols and Burton were perhaps suggested to Boswell by Johnson, or at least through conversations with him. See *Life of J.*, 2. 504; 3. 186. Johnson also recommended Cheyne's *English Malady* to Boswell, adding (*ibid.*, 3. 99) " . . . . but do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness." Boswell never mentions Cheyne in *The Hypochondriack*, but there is a reminiscence of the warning in *Hyp.* 5, where Boswell refutes Aristotle's opinion that melancholy accompanies genius.

[13] *Hyp.* 27.

it is clear that he was not conscious of any forced attempt to enrich his mind or to supply himself with a stock of references. In his final paper he says of the essays, with an effect of naïve astonishment, "I perceive they are not so lively as I expected they would be. But they are more learned." We may accept his verdict as sound.

In the delightful essays on quotation and similarity among authors (*Hyp.* 21, 22) we find Boswell's theory of the use to which a writer may put the fund of allusion which he has gained from his reading. It is his first care to enlarge Dr. Johnson's definition of quotation as "a passage *adduced out of an author* as evidence or illustration," and to point out that quotation may be taken as readily from speech as from writing. He proceeds to advise restraint in any employment of allusions, whatever plenitude of references or need of authority one may feel, since a padding of quotations about a matter may be taken by the readers to indicate a "poverty of sentiment" in the author himself.[14] In discussing the proper presentation of quotations, Boswell departs once more from the Johnsonian definition; he asserts that they are always illustration, but that they may be divided into the illustrations of fact (in which case only they are *evidence*) and the illustrations of opinion (properly called *authority*). In either case Boswell is firm in requiring "Quotations from authours in their own exact words." He demands also that references to source material should be supplied if evidence is adduced; more, he seems to feel that a full and precise quotation of opinion, as well, has an excellent influence upon readers. Such exactness in reference not only has positive virtues in itself, but it prevents thievery: Boswell notes shrewdly that "it is not very difficult to avoid direct Quotation, by changing the form of a sentiment." He asserts with righteous contempt,

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[14] It is amusing, with the dicta of this essay in mind, to see Boswell explaining his unnecessary insertion of a favorite bit from Virgil:

> The *idea* of a *sound!* Strange vapour of contemplation! Yet we are all fully conscious of it. . . . . To quote an authority for it would be ridiculous. But one is always glad to hear *Virgil* in illuſtration. One of his shepherds expressly says, ... "I recollect the time if I had the words." (*Hyp.* 67.)

Moſt assuredly a writer who means to make what has been written by another pass as a part of his own work, which is at beſt but a theftuous trick, the only merit he can have is, being a dexterous thief.[15]

His chief condemnation falls, however, upon a form of trickery which exactness of reference itself could not prevent; this is the extraction of one's allusions from digests, or from the quoted material in the work of another writer. To Boswell it is completely inexcusable—a "species of imposition . . . . which is one of the many tricks of the '*Charlataneria eruditorum*—the quackery of the learned.' "[16] This is an opinion which does him honor—so are they all, all honorable opinions; but it does not follow that Boswell himself was always blameless in his practice upon these points.

It is true that for the most part he is extremely careful to give credit where it is due; in the third essay he specifies, for example, that the *Project for Perpetual Peace* was a design "which the *Abbé de St. Pierre* sketched, and *Rousseau* improved"; in the sixty-third he identifies an unfamiliar quotation as a part of "the last poem of an anonymous collection, printed for Gillyflower in Westminster Hall, 1694." His concluding remarks in the third essay on country life (*Hyp.* 38) are taken from a letter in a contemporary publication, which he acknowledges handsomely—"In the *Annual Register*, 1765, there are some very agreeable reflections upon this subject, said to be extracted from a letter written by the Reverend Mr. Comber of East-Newton, Yorkshire." Any number of examples of this meticulously exact reference may be found—so many, in fact, that *The Hypochondriack* has at times an air of literary valetudinarianism; but there are enough instances of *charlataneria eruditi* to keep the balance well upon the side of frail humanity.

In many cases, the careless or false references which Boswell makes are the result of confident familiarity with his favorite sources. This is a credit to him as a reader, but it is an annoying trick in a writer, and does not square with Boswell's own expressions on quotation. Many times he throws off an easy "as the poet says," "as I have read somewhere," or "as is humorously said in

[15] *Hyp.* 22.

[16] *Hyp.* 21.

the play." He makes such irritating references as that in the thirty-eighth essay, to *Les Saisons*—"a modern French poem," or else introduces a line or an expression into his text without any reference whatever.[17] Sometimes his appreciation of a quoted conceit is so exuberant that he cannot resist making additions of his own, as in allusions to Pope's "perpetual blister" (*Hyp.* 41), and to the aged Olympic courser of Ennius (*Hyp.* 70). Worse, he occasionally makes wrong allusions: in the thirty-fifth essay he attributes to *The Spectator* a jest upon the imitators of Shakespeare that comes from Swift's *Martinus Scriblerus;* in the fifty-third he gives one of Hamlet's lines to Polonius!

His remark that "it is not very difficult to avoid direct Quotation, by changing the form of a sentiment," I suspect to be the result of his own experience; certainly he was not always scrupulous in this regard. For example, in some paragraphs of the essay on suicide (*Hyp.* 51), Boswell freely refers to Rousseau's arguments on suicide in the *Nouvelle Héloïse,* and acknowledges his indebtedness. In others, he is clearly employing the idea of Rousseau, but interpolating references to Donne and Walton, and "changing the form of the sentiment" to avoid admitting another reference.[18]

This method of making a statement as if it were his own opinion, and bringing in his authority as corroboration, when he is really indebted for the whole, I find again in the essay on reserve (*Hyp.* 23). Here Boswell is making a paraphrase of Shenstone's prose maxims *On Reserve,* which seemed to him to show so distinct a "power of thinking." He gathers various apothegms from different parts of the little collection, and makes a well-knit whole of them, with the addition of a scriptural quotation of his own; yet he so arranges his reference that without detailed examination of the passages, we should assume Shenstone to be responsible for only a scant third of the passage.

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[17] *Hyp.* 14, 30, 32, 34, 56, 66, 70, etc. These instances are largely quotations from his four chief sources, the Bible, Horace, Shakespeare, and Pope. The majority of his quotations, from whatever source, and whether accompanied by reference or not, contain a false word or phrase—showing that Boswell is frequently quoting from memory.

[18] For detailed examination of this and the following points, see the parallels given in notes to the essays.

Boswell pursues the same literary prestidigitation with the essays of Montaigne and of Johnson, *no one of which is quoted directly at any time.*[19] His favorite among the essays of Montaigne (which I think he read in the translation by Charles Cotton) must have been that *Of Diversion,* to judge from his cordial use of the ideas to be found there. The theme of this essay is that petty diversions of various types, in distracting the mind from the object of any passion, will decrease the passion itself; it is illustrated by instances of diversion from love and from fear. Boswell uses the idea of diverting the mind from fear to explain the apparent calmness of dying men, in the essays on fear and on death (*Hyp.* 2, 15, 51); in his first essay on love (*Hyp.* 11) he employs Montaigne's suggestion that safety for a lover lies in having several objects for the affections, and even goes so far as to repeat Montaigne's admission that one love may be a reigning favorite over the rest. The same number of *The Hypochondriack* contains a borrowing from another essay of Montaigne, *Of Drunkenness;* it is not a quotation from the Frenchman himself, but a repetition of one of his classic allusions, gone very wrong indeed. Within a few pages of each other, Montaigne cites the experiences of Anacharsis (the Scythian philosopher) and Anaxarchus, who was beaten to death in the stone mortar of Nicocreon at Cyprus. Boswell, confusing the names of somewhat similar sound, unconsciously exercises a redistribution of fates, and places Anacharsis in the mortar.[20] Another trace of Montaigne is found in the second essay on parents and children

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[19] It is a fact perhaps worth noting for its curiosity that in *The Hypochondriack* the only quotations from Johnson's works which are both direct and attributed to their source, are the extracts from his *Dictionary* (*Hyp.* 21), his preface to the works of Cowley (*Hyp.* 29), his imitations of Juvenal—better known as *London* (*Hyp.* 41), and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (*Hyp.* 55);—this in spite of Boswell's own testimony that he read *The Rambler* with edification (*Life of J.*, 1. 249 ff.), and that he read *Rasselas* at least once every year (*ibid.*, 1. 397; 3. 151). In *Hyp.* 33 Boswell alludes to Montaigne on drinking, but without direct quotation or exact reference.

[20] It is possible that Boswell had a confused memory of the passage because he knew something of Anacharsis, and nothing of Anaxarchus, so that he attributed the anecdote to the philosopher with whom he had had some previous acquaintance; he refers to Anacharsis correctly as a Scythian philosopher—an identification which Montaigne does not give.

(*Hyp.* 46), where Boswell repeats without acknowledgment Montaigne's observation (in the essay *Of Affection of Fathers to Their Children*) that parental affection is naturally greater and more instinctive than filial. This parallel it is possible to explain by the commonness of the subject of which it treats.[21] Such an explanation, however, can scarcely be made for the bizarre comparison between cannibalism and certain horrid practices of civilization, which appears in Montaigne's *Of Cannibals*, and in Boswell's essay on censure (*Hyp.* 24). It is true that Montaigne's remarks are a philosophic balance between the physical act of eating a man and the physical act of tearing him to pieces on the rack, whereas Boswell's form a figurative comparison of the cruelty of cannibalism with that of scandal; I doubt, however, that the two comparisons were coincidental, since Boswell uses in speaking of scandal the violent verb *mangling*, which is strongly reminiscent of Montaigne's (and Cotton's) effectively brutal phrasing.

Boswell's debt to Johnson is incurred chiefly through his delight in *The Rambler*. Again and again passages in *The Hypochondriack* contain not only a thought from Johnson's philosophical store, but phrasing strongly suggestive of the original—without a hint by Boswell that he is borrowing. One of the most striking cases is Johnson's observation (*The Rambler*, 29) that man suffers from the evils of life more in imagination than in fact, since "every species of distress brings with it some peculiar supports, some unforeseen means of resisting or power of enduring." In the second *Hypochondriack*, Boswell expands the idea with his usual vividness of concrete example, but concludes in almost the same terms:

> It is certain that the ills of life appear more dreadful at a distance than when actually felt. . . . . [They] prove more mild in reality than in fancy, and bring along with them alleviations which cannot be discerned till they are close upon us.

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[21] Boswell says (in the *Life of J.*, 3. 444) that he had heard "an eminent friend" say of the descending course of natural affection that it "was wisely contrived for the preservation of mankind." The subject was frequently debated among the friends (*ibid.*, 2. 116; 4. 243, and *Letters of B.*, 1. 178), but—except for the remark of the eminent person—never in the terms of the parallel I offer.

In his eighteenth essay, Boswell discourses on pride of profession, after a text from Horace; but Johnson had already done the same thing. It is noticeable that *The Hypochondriack* uses a different part of the Horatian sentence for quotation, and vivifies the idea with bright contemporary references; but the argument follows that of the ninth *Rambler*, and comes to much the same conclusions. The same sort of borrowing is seen in *The Hypochondriack* on excess (*Hyp.* 4), in which Boswell follows a line of thought in the thirty-eighth number of *The Rambler*. Johnson begins with an aphorism—"to avoid every extreme is necessary, even to him who has no other care than to pass through the present state with ease and safety"—and in the course of his essay mentions poverty as an indisputable "evil always in our view, an evil complicated with so many circumstances of uneasiness and vexation, that every man is studious to avoid it"; he proceeds to show how in those who do wish to avoid it, the greed of riches replaces the evil of poverty. Boswell takes for his motto Terence's *ne quid nimis*, and comments upon it, "We all very well understand . . . . 'the having or doing nothing in an extreme degree,' which my motto inculcates as an useful lesson for passing life easily and comfortably." After showing that wealth in excess may cause some unhappiness, he breaks off with the assertion that poverty will certainly cause more; yet in the next paragraph he returns to the idea of excessive wealth, accenting the way in which "the rust of a hoard corrupts whatever is in contact with it."

Another probable source of material was *The Spectator*, to which Boswell alludes in his letters as "my early favorite."[22] The parallels between *The Hypochondriack* and the papers of Addison and Steele are rarely close repetitions of actual wording; rather, Boswell seems to use the older essays as patterns by which to shape his own ideas. His papers on parental and filial relations (*Hyp.* 45, 46) contain passages very reminiscent of *The Spectator*, 120, 181, 189, 222, 263; his second and third essays, on

[22] *Letters of B.*, 2. 336. See also the remarks upon the essays of Addison and Steele in *Hyp.* 1. Boswell was, of course, aware also of Johnson's high opinion of *The Spectator*, which found expression in the encomiastic conclusion to his *Life of Addison:*

> Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.

fear, war, and the soldierly spirit, develop suggestions made in *The Spectator*, 152, on the "mechanic courage" and "loose thinking" of men in military service; the whole organization of the essay on ridicule (*Hyp.* 62) is a perfect parallel to the plan of *The Spectator*, 249, on the same subject; and the plan of the essay on reserve (*Hyp.* 44) reflects *The Spectator*, 222, 225. Boswell does not acknowledge his indebtedness in any of these instances, but in another case he seems to have been distinctly conscious of his duplication of ideas in *The Spectator*. The essay on youth and age (*Hyp.* 9), which repeats without acknowledgment the expressions of distaste in *The Spectator*, 153, for those old men who envy the animal vivacity of youth, is begun with an apology for the use of a "common subject," and the justification of such use by the assertion that the fresh treatment of an old theme is "proof of no ordinary genius."

On one occasion, Boswell presents without acknowledgment an idea from the theater of his day. There occurs at the end of his essay on reserve (*Hyp.* 23) the suggestion that scandalous stories should be traced like bills of exchange—to the last endorser; it is a conceit so fresh and witty that one is disappointed to find its brilliant original in the mouth of Sir Peter Teazle.[23]

These vaguenesses and paraphrasings were, however, nothing —if we judge Boswell by his own standards—to the darkest of his literary sins. There is evidence in *The Hypochondriack* that he himself was one of the erudite charlatans whom he condemned as practicing an imposition upon their readers—"quoting at second-hand by adopting Quotations inserted in the writings of other authors." It is true that his thefts of this sort are not many, and that they are taken chiefly from the reviews of his time, which he may have considered in a sort public property; but he certainly allowed no such excuse in his own theory of allusive composition, and his strongest reason for censuring this particular sort of *charlataneria eruditorum* may, I fear, be turned against him. It is in his case distinctly an "affectation," though not of learning, at least of reading.

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[23] *School for Scandal*, 2. 2. See parallels in the notes to this essay. The duplication in this case was first noticed by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, in his biography of Boswell.

The most interesting of these is *The Hypochondriack's* excerpt from an article in the Critical Review on the diary of John Rutty, which Boswell also reproduced in the *Life* because it had diverted Dr. Johnson so much when Boswell showed it to him in 1777. In both cases the same excerpts are presented,[24] but the passage is handled in the *Life* very differently from the way in which it is given in the essays. In the *Life* Boswell inserts the quotation from the magazine with great care, elaborating the biographical data concerning the author, and describing the form of the work with precision; he indicates distinctly the difference between the comment of the reviewer and the selections which the reviewer has taken from the diary of John Rutty itself. In the essays, the title of the work is given hurriedly and informally, and the reviewer's comment and the specimen paragraphs are presented as an indistinguishable whole; moreover, Boswell is so careless of announcement and punctuation that it is difficult to determine where he himself leaves off and the reviewer begins. On first scanning the essay, the reader could very easily assume that most of the comment was Boswell's own, and that the specimens from the diary had been selected by him. As a matter of fact, there is nothing, either in the *Life* or *The Hypochondriack*—from the specimens of the diary to the biographical notes on Dr. Rutty—which did not appear in the columns of the Critical Review. In other words, Boswell probably never saw the diary in question at all. I am obliged to suspect that Boswell allowed himself to present the passage indistinctly in *The Hypochondriack* because he liked his readers to feel that their essayist was a man of considerable up-to-date reading; whereas, like most people in an age of bustle and hurry, he did not scruple on occasion to offer as his own the work of faithful commentators, "at second-hand."[25]

Another instance of the same naughty habit, without even a pretense of reference to the actual source of Boswell's quotation,

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[24] *Life of J.*, 3. 194–95; *Hyp.* 66.

[25] It is curious that even in the *Life of J.*, Boswell should allow an instance of literary borrowing which he so disapproved. His care in making the passage quoted an "authentick" one does not lessen the scandal of taking selections of the diary from a review without having seen the book; it only serves to advertise his quoting at second hand.

occurs in *The Hypochondriack* on ridicule (*Hyp.* 62). Here we find the innocent paragraph,

> There is a great difficulty in preserving the boundaries between what is grave and what is ridiculous; and although *Calamy* tells us of *Wild*, a presbyterian minister, who was remarkable for facetiousness and being what is called a boon companion, that "he was very serious in serious things," which is so far much to be praised, I doubt that his seriousness would, at least in the suspicion of others, be too much tinged with the ridiculous.

This intimates that Boswell knew Calamy's book well; the very carelessness of the reference suggests a broad and inclusive familiarity. But unfortunately the acquaintance of Boswell with Calamy antedated this essay by less than a month, and was made by the good offices of an anonymous letter-writer in the London Magazine. The essay on ridicule was printed in the magazine for November 1782; the letter on Calamy's characterization of Wild was printed in the number for October 1782, although it was dated by the writer in September. There is in the Boswellian paragraph nothing that is not included in the letter; there is a shift of the wording, but the precisely identical terms are employed. Of the words directly repeated, *facetiousness* is particularly striking—it is not a common term with Boswell.

These things make us suspicious of Boswell's remarks upon the anonymous publication entitled *Thelyphthora*, in the first essay on marriage (*Hyp.* 41). They have the same air of careless familiarity, and the same equivocal generality:

> There has perhaps been no period when Marriage was more the general topick of conversation than at present; when a celebrated popular preacher has ventured to publish under the title of THELYPHTHORA, an elaborate, nay, as he professes, a *religious* exhortation to the comforts of a plurality of women. I am not going to enter upon the wide field of Marriage, in all its varieties in different parts of the globe. My reflections are to be limited to the good, plain institution established in our own country. . . . . And, instead of attempting an answer to *Thelyphthora*, till I have more leisure to consider whether it is right or wrong, I shall in the mean time relate an anecdote which I had from grave authority.

This essay was printed in the London Magazine for February 1781; the issue for the preceding September had given the entire

first chapter of the book in the body of the magazine, and a long review of the first two volumes of the work in the *Impartial Review of New Publications*, at the back. These excerpts contain everything that Boswell has to say of the book, even to the identity of the author, which the reviewer deduced in his opening paragraphs. It is true, he does not distinctly assert that he has read the *Thelyphthora*, but his expression *instead of attempting an answer . . . . till I have more leisure to consider whether it is right or wrong*, gives us to understand that he has; it certainly does not suggest, as I am sure the truth is, that his consideration would have to include a perusal of the work for the first time, and that his knowledge of it when he wrote the essay was limited to the information he had obtained from his own magazine. He had, moreover, read the review so fast and so lightly that he had but slight grasp of Madan's purpose in writing the book, and his rendering of it is a flippant misinterpretation.

We are also obliged to look askance at the couplet from Boileau which Boswell tosses off in his first essay, since it reproduces faithfully an error which had been made in the quotation of the same two lines in *The Spectator*, 548. The same uneasiness is provoked by Boswell's frequent allusions to the works of the church fathers, when we find that he closes a glowing panegyric on the writings of "these holy sages" with this ingenuous revelation (*Hyp.* 34):

> I . . . . avow myself to be one who venerates the Fathers, in whom, though there are to be sure peculiarities, and even sometimes what seem to be weaknesses, I find an elevation of thought, and a mild propriety, which cannot fail to edify every one who is willing to be improved. *Père Bouhours*, the French critick, has collected and published a pocket volume of their aphorisms, under the title of *Pensées Ingénieuses des Pères de L'Eglise.*

This was a near relative of those indexes against which he inveighed so vigorously as "a guide to imposition."

This inconsistency between Boswell's principles and practice in composition is rendered yet more difficult to understand by the partial explanation which he offers in his passage on similarity among authors, introducing his remarks on plagiarism (*Hyp.* 22):

I must candidly acknowledge, that in my opinion, the sameness or similarity which we frequently find between passages in different authors cannot be with absolute certainty ascribed to its proper origin unless where there is a passage of considerable length in one author, which we can discover in the very same words in another author; and then we may without hesitation pronounce that it is *Plagiarism.* A passage of considerable length, somewhat varied, may be *Imitation;* or it may be *Coincidence* to a certain degree both in thought and expression. A very short passage in one author may be precisely the same with one in another, from pure coincidence, or from ascribing that to instantaneous invention which is truely the effect of memory. But no man would be believed who should affirm, that a long passage exactly in another author seemed to him to be his own production. For although the mind can produce a little without being conscious of its labour, it cannot produce much with the same facility which we experience in the exercise of memory, so as not to be sensible of the difference. . . . . There are innumerable plain truths which every rational being must acknowledge and express as soon as he has understanding and language. These do not fall under the subject of my present essay. No man is a plagiarist or an imitator who says two and two make four; nor is it to be remarked as *Coincidence* that millions say so. But there are many short reflexions not quite obvious, which may yet occur exactly in the same manner to different people.

The difficulty here is that Boswell does not make clear his distinction between plagiarism and imitation, and certainly it seems to have been a very thin one—no more than a slight shift in wording; a man who presents a theme in the exact words of the author without acknowledgment is plagiarizing, but evidently one who without acknowledgment takes another man's thought and most of his words is merely imitating. Boswell demands no more than that the expression be "somewhat varied." The defense is itself too equivocal to be used as a test of equivocal expression in *The Hypochondriack;* we must rely, therefore, on the standards which Boswell laid down for the proper use of quoted material in the essay on quotation, summed up in the first paragraphs of this discussion. It is strange that he did not see how far he was departing from those standards, and how closely his methods of allusion approached those of the French historians whom he censured in the paper on quotation because they "do not give their authorities, but run smoothly on, page after page, as if they had been eye-witnesses of all that they are telling." He

was not, it is true, representing himself as sole authority for facts and events long past, but he was posing as the originator of ideas which he had really borrowed, and the reader of books which he had never seen. I suggest several explanations for this curiously loose system of literary morals.

The first is Boswell's great respect for fact or authority. However paradoxical, it is not impossible that Boswell's great care for exactness in reference upon matters of moment made him have a slight contempt for references in matters poetical or philosophical, on occasion. To a man whose whole philosophy was based upon authority and experience, it might very easily seem unnecessary to quote figurative or speculative expression with the same care that he bestowed on quotations of fact or grave opinion. It is significant that Boswell rejects Dr. Johnson's definition of quotation as matter adduced for evidence or illustration, and replaces it with his own definition, in which quotation is always illustration, but used either as evidence or as authority. He allows no place for quotation or illustration as *ornament*, in this statement. I can only suppose that he made no special mention of it because he took such borrowing for granted, as something of no weight, since there was no question of fact or authority concerned in it.[26]

A second explanation of Boswell's unacknowledged borrowings may be that, having accepted the ideas as true or good, he felt them to be his own. There is a curious paragraph in his essay on similarity among authors, which suggests that he had made some of his "metaphysical researches" on the subject:

> If we should suppose all possible thoughts to be continually floating in the intellectual world, and circulating from mind to mind, there would be no difficulty in imagining what was one man's thought at one time to become another man's thought afterward.

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[26] Or possibly he did not like to spoil his neat definition! In the middle of the essay on quotation (*Hyp.* 21) he speaks of Whitefield's *vivifying* his discourses with quotations, and says that the quotations from one book to another in the Bible are used "sometimes as pointing out the fulfilment of prophecies, sometimes as strengthening a precept, and sometimes only as illustration." This last is obviously neither the illustration of evidence nor that of authority; and equally obviously it is the same use to which Boswell himself put much of his quotation. Yet he made no place for it in his definition. The word *only* in the sentence just quoted is significant.

He scouts the fancy at once,[27] but the mere entertainment of it for a moment is important. Somewhat less tenuous evidence of his feeling that adopted ideas may be legitimate heirs to glory is his attitude toward all excerpts from Johnson's writing. Except for the few formal quotations from Johnson's most dignified works, which I have listed in a previous note,[28] all the borrowings from Johnson's writings (chiefly *The Rambler*) are woven into the general fabric of Boswell's essays as if they had sprung from his own reflections. I believe that in great measure they had; they had become part of Boswell's own thinking because he had accepted them from his teacher—they formed much of his mental background. It is impossible to conceive of Boswell as pilfering from Johnson with the hope of not being detected; more likely he thought of his own essays as a repository of his best ideas, many of which he knew he had acquired from Johnson. It is possible also that he presented as his own the ideas of Rousseau and Shenstone, with a slight careless reference to the original authors on the side, because he had accepted their dicta, and really believed that he had a right to present them as his. The unacknowledged borrowing from Montaigne and *The Spectator* may have become so much a part of his own reflections that he had forgotten his source entirely.

The third explanation of the inconsistency between Boswell's principles and practice may be that he used bits of his reading as text or inspiration for his essays, and all unwittingly drank too deep at times. Nowhere in the essays does he advise such a practice; his one theory concerning reading in relation to composition is that one's favorite authors should supply allusions to support original passages—but his practice shows that frequently he began his original passages after receiving an inspiration from some other author. The habit of building his essays upon his reading is not remarkable until we come to the essays on death

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[27] In terms which once more suggests his desire to place reliance upon definite experiences or authority:

> But I really do not like such abſtruse kind of speculation. I wish to reason upon such principles as experience furnishes, and not to go too far from the common and ordinary train of thinking. To speculate for inſtruction or for amuſement, is wise; but to diſtend our faculties by ineffectual ſtretches is both unwise and painful. (*Hyp.* 22.)

[28] See n. 19, p. 33 above.

(*Hyp.* 14–16). In the first one, Shakespeare is quoted twice at some length, as if Boswell had but recently had the plays in hand, and the opening paragraph is strongly reminiscent of a theme in Young's *Night Thoughts*—"Because they do not think of death, they die." In the third of the group, Young is quoted outright three times, and suggested by paragraphs on the death of friends and the idea that night is the universal time of terror. In this paper also Boswell says,

> After I had resolved to write this one other paper on the subject of Death, I happened to be looking into the *Argenis* of Barclay, a book which had once more celebrity than it now has. . . . .
>
> In that book I lighted upon a passage concerning Death, which immediately attracted my attention.

He wrote the eighteenth essay because he had found a fifty-year-old cookbook, and desired to share his glee in the introduction with his readers; in the twentieth he contrasts and compares savages with the London *mode,* but it is evident that he drew his details from Père Lafitau, whom he quotes at length, and whom he describes as "the excellent painter of the manners of American Indians." In the essay on diversion (*Hyp.* 25), he builds his whole structure upon Xenophon's memoir of Agesilaus. He finally presents his first paper on drinking (*Hyp.* 30), which he had promised much earlier, after seeing the chapter on the subject in Sir Walter Raleigh's *Instructions to His Son,* and pursues the subject in the following essay after refreshing his mind on the remarks of Aulus Gellius about it. At some time near the composition of the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth essays, he was reading *De Animi Tranquillitate* by his fellow-Scot, Wilson: a quotation from the work is used as the motto for the thirty-seventh, and another is introduced into the following paper. In the first essay on parents and children (*Hyp.* 45) he shows a fresh and ready knowledge of Justus Lipsius, whom he quotes several times on the subject of the paper. He decided upon his topic for the forty-eighth essay after reading Suetonius's *Octavius*, which "disposed his mind to think of Sleep and Dreaming." The paper on learning (*Hyp.* 50) probably sprang from Cicero's *Pro Archia Poeta,* which Boswell quotes at some length, and which, he says, "I was lately reading at a more mature period of my life." The

last essay on hypochondria (*Hyp.* 63) was written on that subject chiefly, I think, because Boswell had "lately got from France a very ingenious little treatise upon it"; he was not suffering from the malady at the time, and his excuse for offering a fourth paper on the subject is thin—"I have so long a time been free of the direful malady . . . . that it may become necessary for me to be put in mind that I am an Hypochondriack." And in the paper on swearing, next before the concluding essay, there comes like a climax Boswell's deliberate statement that he had done some reading especially for this paper:

> My opinion as to the impious immorality of swearing in passion, or in levity of talk, was never quite settled, till in the view of writing this essay I looked into the four sermons which that very distinguished prelate, Archbishop Secker, preached against it.

From these instances it is clear that Boswell frequently developed themes of his own from an idea suggested by his reading. It is my suggestion that he had, in the paraphrased passages, every intention of doing the same thing, but did it badly. We know that he often wrote in great haste; we know too that he had a generous admiration for the good things of other men. It is possible, I think, that these two circumstances combined to prevent any great departure from his original; so that what began as a laudable intention to give his readers a rich bit from some other man's writing, developed and adorned and adapted by means of Boswell's own reflections and anecdotes, ended as a hurried résumé, half slurred in with his passing remarks. The indefiniteness of reference may be due to the haste with which the essays were sometimes written, or to a hazy recollection which, on account of the informality of *The Hypochondriack*, Boswell did not trouble to verify.

BOSWELL'S NOTEBOOKS, JOURNALS, AND LETTERS

Whatever he owed to his reading for inspiration and "a good store of allusion," Boswell had other sources for which he was indebted only to his experience and his zeal for preserving a good phrase. These were his journals, his letters (of which he kept copies, many times),[29] and those various "collections of good

[29] In the *Life of J.*, 2. 3, he states that he kept copies of his letters to Johnson.

things" which he mentions in *The Hypochondriack.*[30] The only survivals of these materials are some of Boswell's letters, his *Boswelliana*, and a fragment of journal. The other notebooks have completely disappeared.[31] The results of their fatness are seen in Boswell's three representative works, but these only whet the appetite for more; anything which gives a hint of what those notebooks contained is always welcome. It is a delight, therefore, to find in the essays a multitude of fresh new stories, and traces of notes now lost, which we have met nowhere else, as well as echoes of those on which the *Tours* and the *Life* were built.

One of the lost notebooks must have been a small volume which Boswell carried about on his person, in order to jot down the things that pleased him in his chance reading. He gives us a short distinct proof of this excellent habit in one of his essays on drinking (*Hyp.* 32)—in which he offers a "sentence upon the vice of drunkenness in Boston's *Fourfold State of Man*, a pious, practical book," with the remark that he had "marked it in [his] pocket book, as strong and justly said." In all probability such a book as this preserved the anonymous reviewer's eloquent discourse on death, the discussion in the Monthly Review of a letter on the *Marks of Imitation*, the "very agreeable reflections" of the Reverend Mr. Comber, and any number of other bits from contemporary literature, which Boswell quotes.[32]

Other notebooks must have been devoted to collections repre-

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[30] *Hyp.* 22, 32.

[31] The letters were first edited in 1857, by a Mr. Francis, who gave them in a very fragmentary state. Dr. C. B. Tinker edited them with many additions in 1924, but even yet the collection is incomplete. The journal fragment, which records particulars of Johnson's early life, communicated by him and others, was published (1925) under the title *Boswell's Notebook, 1776–1777.* Boswell's "collection of good things" with the misleading title *Boswelliana* was edited in 1874 by the Reverend Charles Rogers, with a "Memoir of James Boswell." The discovery and ultimate publication of further Boswell papers is announced as this study is going to press. See above, page 24.

[32] See *Hyp.* 14, 22, 38, etc. The article on *Marks of Imitation*, quoted in *Hyp.* 22, had been printed twenty years before, in the Monthly Review for February 1758, when Boswell was eighteen. The lapse of time between that date and the period of the essay in which the passage is quoted gives some hint of the early beginning of Boswell's note-taking and his care in preserving his notebooks.

senting various definite interests, literary and otherwise. In the essay on similarity among authors (*Hyp.* 22) Boswell observes,

> It is an innocent entertainment to trace such similarities; and were a man to read much with that view only, he might make a large collection, for which I, and probably many others, should thank him.

It is evident that he had amused himself thus, and kept his discoveries collected together, for some time; he gives a long list of parallel passages derived from his favorite authors as a basis for the main part of the essay. Another collection must have been composed of curiosities found in old Scottish documents; it was no doubt the outcome of suggestions made by Boswell's father and Dr. Johnson, who were anxious to have Boswell make a study of historic papers.[33] Evidences of it exist in the essays on hospitality and on swearing (*Hyp.* 58 and 69), in which there are long quaint passages taken from ancient Scottish laws on these matters; in the paper on hospitality Boswell takes pains to point out the conditions which provoked the legislation, thus accomplishing the particular investigation which Johnson had suggested—the examination of outworn customs. Perhaps Boswell was using his father's notes for these essays rather than his own; we know that Lord Auchinleck had made a considerable collection of the sort, because Boswell says so in the *Life of Johnson.* He says at the same time, however, that he plans to publish his own notes,[34] with those of his father, and it is not impossible that he had begun his contributions to the collection as early as 1782, the date of the essay on hospitality. Unfortunately, the fragments in the essays are probably all that remains of collection, additions, and all.

Aside from these collections of notes and curiosities, there are constant evidences in the essays of Boswell's journals, his repositories of anecdote and happy phrasing. Much as all lovers of Johnson and Boswell regret the loss of the manuscript diaries on general principles, their feeling of frustration must be even sharper in reading *The Hypochondriack,* so filled with suggestions

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[33] *Life of J.*, 3. 471.

[34] In a note to the passage cited above, Boswell says: "I have a valuable collection made by my Father, which, with some additions and illustrations of my own, I intend to publish." This note may be dated shortly before 1791, the year of the first edition of the *Life of J.*

and samples of what they have never been able to see. There are, for instance, frequent anecdotes and instances drawn from the years on the continent, the original journals of which were lost even to Boswell himself through the carelessness of his agents in Holland. Boswell laments them in the essay on diaries (*Hyp.* 66), as well he might, since he assures us that his notes were "like portable soup, of which a little bit by being dissolved in water will make a good large dish; for their substance by being expanded in words would fill a volume."[35] It is not impossible that in *The Hypochondriack* he is trying to recapture some of these lost treasures and make his memories permanent. The early papers of the series especially contain an unusual number of references to European places and customs: number 3 comments upon the unreasoning lack of vision in the men who labor in the arsenal at Venice; number 4 presents an extended instance of the Dutch *verbeetering huys;* number 6 quotes a Leyden physician; number 8 cites various Italian towns to show the evils of sumptuary laws. After this essay the references to the years of travel are few and thin. Number 13 mentions one of Boswell's friends who talked with him about love "when we were sauntering in rather a dreary frame on a winter day in the Mall at Utrecht"; in numbers 17 and 21 there are one or two generalized references to Dutch books and authors; by the time we reach essays 23 and 24, the foreign instances have dwindled to mere elements in figurative expression. It cannot be asserted of course that these items are taken only from memories of the journals which Boswell had lost. They may have been derived from European notes which he had managed to preserve otherwise, and he may have ceased to use them in the essays because he felt a growing certainty that he had enough material of the sort to make a separate book. He told Johnson in 1778 that he wanted to publish an account of his travels, and that he had "a variety of materials collected."[36] When the Doctor scouted the idea, Boswell was sufficiently assured

[35] In the same essay there is a passage on other diaries that Boswell lost, by the more comic but equally irritating circumstance of writing in code and forgetting the key to it.

[36] *Life of J.*, 3. 342. The year in which this remark was made covers numbers 3 to 14 in *The Hypochondriack*, essays in which the foreign instances are most frequent.

of his *collectanea* to answer that he could "give an entertaining narrative, with many incidents, anecdotes, *jeux d'esprit*, and remarks, so as to make very pleasant reading." Doctor Johnson persisted in dissuasion; the travels were never recounted;[37] and aside from a few plays of wit in *Boswelliana* and the scattered expressions in Boswell's letters, we have no account of the years on the continent except through the details suggested in *The Hypochondriack.*

The essays likewise contain some fine bits from Boswell's English experiences, which do not appear in his other works. There are unusually candid glimpses of Boswell's private life,[38] and less important but very vivid suggestions as to his activities in the social life of his day.[39] At times he comments—more frankly than he could do elsewhere, except in his letters—on the foibles and habits of various acquaintances,[40] or reports with relish certain anecdotes of Johnson which are not given anywhere else. Johnson's name is never attached to them,[41] but it is impossible to mistake the Johnsonian tone and quality, already rendered with dramatic faithfulness to the original. Sometimes it appears that the *Life* gives half of a conversation, and that *The Hypochondriack* offers the rest of it; the part appearing in the essays is usually much more personal than that in the biography. For example, in the third essay on marriage there occurs a hint of argument on matrimonial stability, ending with a sally on the excellent habits of birds, in terms unmistakably Johnsonian; it was probably part of the argument on conjugal infidelities, originally recorded in the *Life* for 1779, which Boswell reduced very

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[37] Not necessarily because of Dr. Johnson's adverse opinion, however. Boswell added in a note to the conversations cited above (*Life of J.*, 3. 342 n.):

> I believe . . . . I shall follow my own opinion; for the world has shewn a very flattering partiality to my writings, on many occasions.

[38] See the essays on love, marriage, drinking, death, hypochondria, and country life, and the treatment of them in "The 'Secret History' of the Series," above.

[39] See *Hyp.* 9, 18, 47, 54, 63, 66, 69.

[40] See *Hyp.* 24, 28, 56, 57, 69, etc. Most of these anecdotes are given without reference by name.

[41] A reason for this curious omission is suggested in the following pages, but see also "The 'Secret History' of the Series," above. The Johnsonian passages occur in *Hyp.* 13, 20, 27, 43, 56, 65.

much on the advice of Windham and others.[42] At present the passage in the *Life* is a mere brief statement of the discussion, and no hint of the witty interchange remains. Another case is the topic of the rejected suitor. In the *Life* Boswell gives this much of an account:

> It being asked whether it was reasonable for a man to be angry at another man whom a woman preferred to him;—JOHNSON. "I do not see, Sir, that it is reasonable for a man to be angry at another, whom a woman has preferred to him; but angry he is, no doubt; and he is loath to be angry at himself."[43]

In Boswell's third essay on love (*Hyp.* 13) we find a passage which seems to me to include a distinct continuation of the remark in the biography:

> I had once a dispute with a philosopher of the first eminence, whether or not a man, whose addresses have been refused by a woman, should think it a disparagement to him. I maintained that he should not, because it is no more than a proof that he is not agreeable to her particular fancy; and he may have a full conviction that the man whom she prefers to him is his inferior in every respect. But it was given against me upon this medium, that a man who has unsuccessfully attempted to please, has reason to be humbled by his failure, and other women regard with inferiority him who they know has been rejected.

Boswell had been rejected more than once in his youth; it was perhaps a sore point with him, so that he did not care to elaborate it in the biography published under his own name.

Those of the Boswellian records with which we are already familiar—his letters, the *Life of Johnson*, and *Boswelliana*—afford comparisons to the essays that give evidence of Boswell's various methods of composition. Of them all, the most curious are the instances which show that he is modeling certain essays upon themes from his own letters.

The letters thus used as sources are few, and they occur only in Boswell's correspondence with Johnson, Temple, and Garrick;

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[42] *Life of J.*, 3. 462; *Hyp.* 43. See discussion in the notes to this essay.

[43] *Life of J.*, 2. 432.

in every case the passages reproduced are philosophic reflections.[44] In 1775 he suggested in a letter to Temple[45] that no man's life is pleasing if examined in detail. The idea is, as he says himself, a "very confused speculation," not soundly or clearly expressed—more a question than a statement. Six years later, in the second essay on country life (*Hyp.* 37), Boswell repeats the same thought, but with the firmness of assurance, introducing the remark with a strong analogy drawn from Swift and adorning it with a quotation from Pope:

> Experience has taught me, that as a microscopic eye would make a man suffer continual disgust while beholding the physical world around him,[46] too prying a view of any system of life produces a dislike of it. Indeed I have remarked, that no exact detail of life from morning to night, however much the person who gave it was disposed to represent it as pleasing, had the effect to make one wish to realize it, to "live o'er each scene." On the contrary I can say for myself, that the effect of every such detail has been to make me wonder how the daily task could be performed, and pity those who played their parts in the wearisome drama.

In April 1771, Boswell wrote to Johnson full of regret that he had not written a letter to London for a year and a half, and admitting that he understood at last the curious indolence which can prevent the warmest friends from corresponding frequently with each other (a notable characteristic of Johnson, which provoked complaint from Boswell to the last). In April 1774, Boswell wrote to Garrick apologizing for not answering a letter received some time before; the passage on his remissness develops into a short essay on the subject, enlarging on the theme of separated friends, citing *The Idler*, and comparing the indolent friend to Tantalus reversed—"receding, he knows not how, from what he loves, which is full as provoking as when what he loves recedes from him." The sixth number of *The Hypochondriack*

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[44] The duplication of these particular passages presents interesting suggestions as to the conscious artistry with which Boswell composed his letters, and the pride he took in fortunate turns of thought which he produced in them.

[45] *Letters of B.*, 1. 246.

[46] This allusion to Gulliver's disgust at seeing the Brobdingnagian skin too closely is a favorite with Boswell. He uses it again, more distinctly stated, in *Boswelliana* and *Hyp.* 24; see n. 10 to that essay.

was developed in 1778, from both of these letters,[47] though it depends chiefly on the extended expression of the letter to Garrick. It is noticeable that in the essay the figures and references are sharply reduced; only the comparison to Tantalus remains, and that in a form more direct than the original figure. It is made to serve as a mere introduction to the pathetic idea of unnecessary separation and loss, which is brought out with all the power of Boswell's lively imagination, and a vigor of style that creates a sense of climax:

> Hypochondria sometimes brings on such an extreme degree of languor, that the patient has a reluctance to every species of exertion. The uneasiness occasioned by this state, is owing to a vivacity of imagination, presenting at the same time, ideas of activity; so that a comparison is made between what is, and what should be. . . . . To be therefore overpowered with languor, must make a man very unhappy; he is tantalized with a thousand ineffectual wishes which he cannot realize. For as Tantalus is fabled to have been tormented by the objects of his desire being ever in his near view, yet ever receding from his touch as he endeavoured to approach them, the languid Hypochondriack has the sad mortification of being disappointed of realizing any wish by the wretched defect of his own activity. While in that situation, time passes over him only to be loaded with regrets. The important duties of life, the benevolent offices of friendship are neglected, though he is sensible that he shall upbraid himself for that neglect till he is glad to take shelter under the cover of disease. . . . . To pay a visit, or write a letter to a friend, does not surely require much activity; yet such small exertions have appeared so laborious to an Hypochondriack, that he has delayed from hour to hour, till friendship has grown cold for want of having its heat continued.

In the same letter to Garrick from which this passage was developed, there occurs a tender reference to the death of Goldsmith, with an allusion to Young's consoling thought that friends who die before us make death easier through hope of seeing them, and an affectionate fancy, at once simple and engaging, that "were our Club all removed to a future world, but one or two, *they*, one should think, would incline to follow." In the third essay on death (*Hyp.* 16), written in 1779, the entire passage is preserved, with the personal element made general, a certain development

[47] *Letters of B.*, 1. 181, 201. See parallels in notes to the essay.

of the reasons for our sorrow added, and the allusion to Young expanded to a formal quotation:

> The death of kind relations, or friends, is, in my apprehension, the severest affliction which can befall us in respect to this world, for it both impresses us with a lively sense of our own frailty, and deprives us of the best comforts to which we have been habituated; yet, with respect to the other world, and the dreary passage to it, we are really benefited by such affliction, if we make a right use of it, so as that it shall loosen our attachment to earth, and allure us to die with placid hope, as Dr. Young admirably says.
>
> "Our dying friends are pioneers to smooth
> Our rugged pass to death, to break those bars
> Of terror and abhorrence nature throws
> 'Cross our obstructed way, and thus to make
> Welcome, as safe, our port from every storm."
>
> I can suppose a man to have more relations and friends whom he loves upon the other side of the grave than upon this, in which situation the attraction to the other world must be so strong as to render his quitting this by no means painful.

The passage is rounded off in a manner very characteristic of the essays, with an additional quotation to enforce the truth, and a vigorous, concrete figure of speech:

> Cicero exults in the prospect of meeting with illustrious men long ago departed, as well as with valued friends; and, after the solemn exercises of religion, I know no kind of meditation which can counteract the natural fear of Death so well as this. One who is to leap across a pit, or ride through a deep water, ought not to look into it, but beyond it.[48]

The *Life of Johnson* was published eight years after the last number of *The Hypochondriack* appeared, so that any relationship between the two must have been established by means of a common source, or by the mere exercise of Boswell's memory. I incline to the second supposition, because, although there are many analogies between the two works, they do not for the most part suggest that Boswell in the essays is working over the phrasing of

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[48] It is interesting to find that this allusion to Cicero appears, directly quoted, in yet another of Boswell's letters, written in 1765 to John Wilkes, on the death of Churchill (*Letters of B.*, 1. 74). The concluding sentence is much the same advice as that which Boswell gives to Zélide (*ibid.*, 1. 47), and offers to his readers in *Hyp.* 40, 44, 54.

some carefully kept notebook or journal. He seems to take the same attitude toward the sayings of Johnson that he assumes toward the works of his favorite writers; he accepts most of them as improving ideas which he has added to his own philosophy, and does not usually keep them separate from his own expressions by formal quotation—indeed, he probably uses the ideas from conversations with Johnson with even less consciousness of borrowing. Various essays are almost centos of Johnson's opinons, mingled with Boswell's reflections and bright concrete detail. Almost always the thoughts of the two men are so interwoven, and the parts from Johnson represent such widely separated periods of the friendship, that it is obvious Boswell is writing from memory, not troubling to consult his notebooks.[49]

In many cases, what appear to be important parallels between *The Hypochondriack* and early conversations presented in the *Life*, are no more than coincidental duplications. For example: in the conversations recorded for 1769, there is mention on October 16 of the critical powers of Abbé DuBos, followed by notes of a talk on October 19, in which execution was discussed; in the sixty-eighth *Hypochondriack*, on execution (printed in 1783), Boswell makes an allusion to a work of Abbé DuBos to prove a point in connection with his topic. One's first inference is that he is remembering those two early conversations, and developing his essay from them. However, that number of *The Hypochondriack* is quite independent of any such connection; it is a faithful reprint of an essay written by Boswell for the Public Advertiser in 1768 —a year before the conversations with Johnson took place.[50] Another striking instance of similarities which do not represent a preservation of Johnson's words, but mere coincidence of opinion, occurs in Boswell's paper on subordination (*Hyp.* 19). In that essay, written in 1779, Boswell says much the same thing that he takes down with reverence from Johnson as final wisdom in 1781.

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[49] See parallels given in notes to *Hyp.* 8, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27, 35, 40, 52, 57, 62.

[50] For this and the following instance, see parallels in the essays concerned. Boswell may have been impelled to reprint his old essay as *Hyp.* 68, and even to add the new paragraphs which he writes at the end of it, because of the suggestions in a conversation with Johnson in 1783—as I shall show in my ensuing pages. But that fact does not alter the point which I make here.

In one passage, however, of the essay on imitation (*Hyp.* 35), Boswell appears to be drawing together some notes on a topic so definite—arranged, moreover, in a manner corresponding so closely to the arrangement of the same material in the *Life*—that we cannot well avoid fancying him at work (in both instances) developing some cross-references already established in a common source of notes. Whether or not he is writing directly from his journals, however, the passages in the essay and the *Life* are so strikingly similar that a comparison of them will serve to show the contrast between Boswell's methods as essayist and as biographer. I shall quote the two paragraphs in full, italicizing the comparable points for readier reference.

From conversations of 1777 in the *Life of Johnson:*

> Talking of biography, I said, in writing a life, a man's peculiarities should be mentioned, because they mark his character. JOHNSON. "Sir, there is no doubt as to peculiarities; the question is, whether a man's vices should be mentioned; for instance, whether it should be mentioned that Addison and Parnell drank too freely: *for people will probably more easily indulge in drinking from knowing this;* so that more ill may be done by the example than good by telling the whole truth." Here was an instance of his varying from himself in talk; for when Lord Hailes and he sat one morning calmly conversing in my house at Edinburgh, I well remember that Dr. Johnson maintained, that "If a man is to write *A Panegyrick*, he may keep vices out of sight; but *if he professes to write A Life, he must represent it really as it was*"; and when I objected to the danger of telling that Parnell drank to excess, he said, "that it would *produce an instructive caution to avoid drinking, when it was seen, that even the learning and genius of Parnell could be debased by it.*" And in the Hebrides he maintained, as appears from my *Journal*, that *a man's intimate friend should mention his faults, if he writes his life.*

From *The Hypochondriack* of 1780, number 35:

> But it is not only in literary composition . . . . that there is a propensity to imitate the faults of eminent men. There is a much more serious danger, when it is considered how ready we are to imitate even their vices . . . . [We] are apt to *indulge ourselves in immoralities which we find the world disposed to overlook in eminent men,* without reflecting that we have not the great qualities by which such vices are counterbalanced; and that even if it were so, *the eminence of character which we admire is to a certain degree diminished and stained by them.*

This delusive propensity to imitate the vices of eminent men, makes it a question of some difficulty in biography, whether their faults should be recorded. We have indeed the high example of holy writ, where we find the errours and crimes even of saints and martyrs fairly and freely related. But we ought not to assimilate human compositions to what carries a reverential awe. . . . . At the same time, *truth is sacred, and real characters should be known.* I am therefore of opinion, that *a biographer should tell even the imperfections and faults of those whose lives he writes,* provided that he takes a conscientious care not to blend them with the general lustre of excellence, but to distinguish and separate them, and *impress upon his readers a just sense of the evil, so that they may regret its being found in such men, and be anxiously disposed to avoid what hurts even the most exalted characters,* but would utterly sink men of ordinary merit.

The chief difference between the passages lies in the generalization of the theme in the essay as against the extreme particularization of the paragraph in the *Life*. The emphasis in the latter case is entirely upon the topic of truth in biographical writing; the passage is not an artistically written paragraph but a neat compendium of remarks uttered by Johnson at various times. The definite references of time, place, and company which tag each observation show clearly how the collection was brought together by a series of cross-references, welding together items scattered throughout the journals. Boswell is careful to distinguish between his types of sources: for one remark he quotes his journal flatly, and for another refers to a witness to make a recollection "authentick." The passage is rich in exact transcriptions of allusion and illustration; Boswell even manages to wedge in a comment which justifies his own methods in biography. It is noticeable, however, that the reference to Biblical biographies, included in the essay, is missing in the passage in the *Life*, although it is fully quoted, in a note credited to Malone, elsewhere in the work.[51]

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[51] Boswell prints a statement signed by Malone in order to establish Johnson's authority for a statement in his *Life of Addison;* in the course of it the Biblical allusion occurs (*Life of J.*, 4. 62):

> The sacred writers, (he observed,) related the vicious as well as the virtuous actions of men; which had this moral effect, that it kept mankind from *despair*, into which they would naturally fall, were they not supported by the recollection that others had offended like themselves, and by penitence and amendment of life had been restored to the favour of Heaven.

In the essay Boswell's method is didactic rather than narrative; he is interested in reflections upon the dangers of imitation, and the whole matter of biography is reduced to a mere instance in point. He is primarily producing a carefully wrought, unified paragraph, in which he uses only the essence of these various conversations, adapted to meet the needs of his theme. The essay therefore lacks the examples and personal allusions which the notebooks supplied to the biography; but this very reduction of reference to a plane of no importance allows Boswell to carelessly add the item which he felt obliged to omit from his authentic symposium in the *Life*—the point that complete revelation of character in biography is justified by Scriptural example. I assume that Boswell had heard this opinion from Johnson, but had not kept a note upon it, since he depends so completely upon the statement of Malone in the *Life;* he had perhaps jotted down an indefinite reminder of it in his collected data on biographical writing. He felt free to insert the general idea as a side-light in the informal essays without stopping to consider whether his note was authentic or not; in the *Life* the questioned note was ruthlessly cut away from the passage for which Boswell was vouching personally, and was inserted only over the signature of Malone, in due chronological order.[52]

On another occasion, if we can trust the coincidence of date between the *Life* and *The Hypochondriack,* Boswell seems to be producing an essay directly following some hint in recent conversation with Johnson. Among the undated anecdotes of the spring of 1783, we find Johnson haranguing against the new method of conducting executions:

"No, Sir, (said he, eagerly,) it is *not* an improvement: they object that the old method drew together a number of spectators. Sir, executions are intended to draw spectators. If they don't draw spectators they don't answer their purpose."[53]

This perhaps moved Boswell to a new consideration of his favorite

[52] For another interesting instance of this difference between Boswell's methods in the *Life* and in the essays, see my discussion of the passages on the diary of John Rutty, taken by Boswell from the pages of the Critical Review (under "Boswell's Reading," p. 37).

[53] *Life of J.*, 4. 217–18.

topic[54]—or perhaps it merely reminded him of an essay which he had written some time before, and might safely use again; at any rate, *The Hypochondriack* for May 1783 (number 68) deals with executions, the body of it being one of Boswell's old essays, printed in the Public Advertiser fifteen years before. Whatever his reasons were for reprinting an old essay rather than writing a new one, Boswell found time and interest enough to add several paragraphs at the end, to enforce upon the reader the point which Johnson had made: he gives instances of the way in which criminals may be executed so as to "strike terrour to the spectators," and advocates certain horrible changes in the English system, calculated to make execution more impressive.

It is curious that Boswell does not use in his essays anecdotes or plays of wit that appear in the *Life*. For this purpose he used other journals, or parts of the journals concerning Johnson which he did not employ in the biography, and his "collections of good things." Our only extant source among all these, for comparison with the essays, is the *Boswelliana*. It is a small collection, which could be easily contained in an ordinary blank book such as schoolchildren use; so that the numerous instances in which it presents parallels to *The Hypochondriack* are a large proportion. The anecdotes and witty remarks which make up the collection are intended to supplement the journals, in all probability: there are a great many stories of foreign courts, recollections of Boswell's foreign experiences, and anecdotes that he heard from various people while he was in Europe, as well as a good number of dryly humorous remarks and tales from his father and other Scotch gentlemen; the English circles and the Club are scarcely represented, aside from some anecdotes of Johnson in the early years of the friendship, which appear also in the *Life*. The chief interest of the collection, however, lies in the number of Boswell's own witty or philosophic remarks which it preserves, introduced for the most part with a formal "Boswell said . . . . " Of the parallels between the *Boswelliana* and *The Hypochondriack*, these selections are the most striking.

The notebook was evidently kept for some years, and the

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[54] Boswell attended executions whenever he could, and frequently wrote reports of the proceedings for the newspapers. See *Hyp.* 68 n. 8.

entries, though usually dated, were not kept in chronological order; so that it is occasionally difficult to be sure whether the essays are quoting the *Boswelliana*, or whether both are drawing their instances from some common source older than they. The older source is evident in the case of Boswell's remark in the sixty-eighth *Hypochondriack* that from his manner of viewing executions, "they become matters of curious speculation, and are relieved of their dreary ideas." This essay was originally written for the Public Advertiser in 1768; the sentence in which the remark occurs is addressed to the printer of the paper, so that it cannot be a late insertion by Boswell. The parallel in the *Boswelliana* is near the end of the volume, after entries dated 1778 and later, and yet it is obviously a recollection from Boswell's youth in Scotland, before 1763—

> At an execution in the Grass Mercat, Boswell was observing that if you will consider it abſtractly there is nothing terrible in it. "No doubt, sir," replied Mr. Love, "if you will abſtract everything terrible that it has about it, nothing terrible will remain."

Whatever the uncertainty about their source, the records of this observation show how tenaciously Boswell clung to his own ideas when he believed them right, even in the face of satire which he manifestly applauded. Another parallel which suggests a common source distinctly is Boswell's contrast of fame which, like a shadow, pursues those who fly, with other things that will not be thus obliging. In the sixth number of *The Hypochondriack*, published in 1778, it is happiness which refuses to follow; in the *Boswelliana*, near the end of the book, and after entries for 1778, the original form of Boswell's contrast is given, but with a definite date preceding either of these instances by four years —

> Dr. Webſter was rather late in coming to a dinner which I gave at Fortune's, 9th July, 1774. His apology was, that juſt as he was coming out a man arrived who had money to pay him, and he ſtayed to receive it. "You was right," said I, "for money is not like fame, that if you fly from it, it will pursue you as your shadow does."

At other times, however, Boswell is clearly drawing his material directly from the collection. Notable instances of it are his comparison of a critic giving false praise to a dishonest assayer

(*Hyp.* 28),[55] William Nairne's witty application of Horace's lines on the ant to a thriving barrister (*Hyp.* 22), and Boswell's own candid admission that spending money was no more pleasurable than having teeth drawn (*Hyp.* 57).

If the passage in the *Boswelliana* is reflective, it is usually developed and adorned in the essays, with the characteristic concreteness and vividness of Boswell's imagery, and his usual method of turning an incomplete suggestion, with the emphasis on a figure of speech, into a well-rounded philosophic expression.[56] On the other hand, if the material in the *Boswelliana* is narrative, it is used only as illustration in the essays, and, however brilliant the phrasing in the original, is cut down to its mere essentials. An example of this treatment is the story of the Highlander who was upbraided for luxury because he could not sleep without a stone beneath his head: in the notebook, it is written as a dialogue, with dramatic vigor, and a singular power to make a character reveal himself in a short sentence or two; in the essay on luxury (*Hyp.* 8), it is hastily sketched in, without any representation of character, and with no quoted speech except the last remark, which carries the point of the story. A yet more striking instance is Lord Kenmore's quotation of a Mohammedan's remark upon wine, which is reproduced with more than usual elaboration in the *Boswelliana*, and reduced to one sentence in the second essay on drinking (*Hyp.* 32).

Occasionally the phrasing of the essays is altered from that of the *Boswelliana* because Boswell is adopting a different tone in treating the subject. On this same matter of drinking, for instance, Boswell speaks in the notebook with complacent warmth, elaborating the warming powers of deep potations in several figures of speech:

> In the southern countries the warmth of the sunny climate makes the people of due warmth without drinking, but in northern countries men's hearts are as hard as cold iron till heated by wine. In warm countries they are like the softer metals naturally; but with us there is no making any impression on the heart till it is heated by the fire of strong liquor. I look upon every jovial company among us as a forge of friendship.

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[55] See parallels for this and following references in notes to the essays.

[56] See *Hyp.* 6, 23, 24, 26, 37, 38, 44, 46, 62.

In *The Hypochondriack,* where he is seriously discussing the dangers and proprieties of drinking, he uses the idea without figurative expression, without zest, as if merely for the interest of the fact:

> The northern nations are more addicted to the use of strong liquors than the southern, in order to supply by art the want of that genial warmth of blood which the sun produces.

Doubtless he was thinking of his remarks in the opening paragraphs of his first essay on drinking (*Hyp.* 30), in which he had candidly admitted a fondness for drinking, and had warned his readers that, far from giving them "a very rigid discourse," he was actually "rather apprehensive of erring upon the other side." Similar changes in phrasing and tone occur in Boswell's use of his figures on the man who rehearses his own faults in public, on the "hurry of spirits" which troubled him so much, on the talkative and the reserved man.[57]

From an examination of the parallels between *The Hypochondriack* and what we know of his various notebooks, we gain a better knowledge of Boswell himself, as well as a little more light on his methods of gathering and using material. His essays[58] were meant to be informal, spontaneous, and easy, but it is obvious also that Boswell meant them to treasure up only his best ideas, expressed in a manner which, for all its apparent freedom, was held to the strict standard of propriety in subject and tone which he set for himself.[59] However hurried, he wrote with a surprising restraint. There is in these papers none of the querulous com-

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[57] See parallels in notes to essays 23 and 26. These were Boswell's own faults; see the discussion of such passages in "The 'Secret History' of the Series," above. His intention to reprimand himself caused the change in tone.

[58] I exclude from these general observations the early essays, reprinted in *The Hypochondriack,* although they are pleasing in many ways, and Boswell evidently liked them. They are distinctly different in tone from the essays written in 1777–1783, even from those which they most resemble in form. See the discussion in "Boswell's Development in Style," p. 65.

[59] This does not prevent an occasional ridiculous use of some favorite serious quotation, for the fun of the thing. See for instance *Hyp.* 18 and notes, in which we find Boswell referring to the ephemeral works of a cook with the same classic quotations which he had formerly applied to the actor.

plaining note so frequent in his letters,[60] especially those to Temple and Johnson, and none of the somewhat pompous attitude—half the boy and half the showman—that sometimes creeps into the *Life*. In *The Hypochondriack* he is independent and sincere, dignified without stiffness and gay without frivolity; it is evident that he wished to make the essays a record, half personal and half philosophic, of his best self. To me this obvious earnestness behind the charming exterior of the series goes far to account for his numerous unexplained borrowings from the ideas of other men. He had set himself to learn from them, through conversation and books, and had kept his gleanings hoarded up in a truly remarkable memory, or in notes which he must have treasured with great care; when he came to write the essays, he spread out his precious collections before his readers, as the best he could give from his varied experiences. He was not always so scrupulously authentic about the facts concerning them as he was later, in the *Life of Johnson*, to be sure; but his meticulous regard for a consistent and elevated spiritual attitude cannot be questioned. How carefully he selected those of his original reflections which he saw fit to use, and how carefully he elaborated or remodeled them, only a reading of the essays themselves can show completely; I hope that this section of my study has given some suggestion of his practice in this regard.

2. BOSWELL'S DEVELOPMENT IN STYLE

The Hypochondriack is singularly adapted to an examination of Boswell's development in style, since, on account of his reprinting papers written some time before the main text of the series, we are able to survey types of his writing from 1765 to 1783.[61] It is odd that in so extended a course of personal expression,

[60] Notice the moderation with which he here treats "Goliahs in argument" who argue for victory (*Hyp.* 34), intolerant parents (*Hyp.* 9, 45), violent political partisans (*Hyp.* 19, 45), and those who make others wince under their ridicule (*Hyp.* 62). In this last instance he says mildly, "I have been much vexed with instances of this which have fallen within my own sphere." Boswell had endured acute suffering from such bullying persons as these various allusions represent; among them the most prominent were his father and Dr. Johnson. See notes to the essays cited.

[61] See "External Facts of Composition and Publication."

Boswell had so little to say about the art of composition. His statements on the subject are few, and they give no hint of standards by which the very distinct development of the essays might have come about.

The one sound comment in the whole series of essays is a digression inserted in the paper on youth and age (*Hyp.* 9), which, though it is a very general expression, shows at least that Boswell understood what constitutes charm and originality in a writer:

> To write upon a common subject is considered by many to be the province of the dull and the ignorant. . . . . But to present a common subject with the pleasing grace of novelty, by placing it in a point of view in which it has not been seen before, by ſtarting unexpected notions concerning it, or even by giving it a fresh colouring, is to exhibit a proof of no ordinary genius.

Any other abstract theories of style which Boswell offers are touched by the sentimentalism of his day. Pathos is an artistic excellence which he mentions with admiration, and it is evident that his definition for the sublime is the dreadful; he solemnly observes (in spite of his "deep abhorrence" of self-murder) that the "dismal workings of the unhappy [suicide's] mind, and all the popular ideas of horrour attending Self-destruction, are great materials for solemn and pathetic poetry."[62] He takes evident pleasure in Blair's *The Grave* and Hervey's "admired meditations,"[63] and praises Locke for a paragraph reflecting the tastes of the sentimental-melancholy school of poets.[64] In discussing specific

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[62] *Hyp.* 51.

[63] *Hyp.* 2.

[64] *Hyp.* 67. Boswell's enjoyment of the sentimental-pathetic is shown again in his presentation of Dr. Johnson's parody on contemporary poetry (*Life of J.*, 3. 181). After quoting the two ridiculous stanzas aptly imitating the weakness of the sentimental school,

> Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
> Wearing out life's evening gray;
> Smite thy bosom, sage, and tell,
> What is bliss? and which the way?
>
> Thus I spoke; and speaking sigh'd;
> —Scarce repress'd the ſtarting tear;
> When the smiling sage reply'd,
> Come, my lad, and drink some beer,

points of style, Boswell is more cheerful, but scarcely less narrow. A rich store of allusion and instances is to him one of the first requirements of authorship,[65] and the ability to illustrate a point strikingly by such means appears to have been his chief criterion of good writing. However, aside from his general comment, his remarks on the various forms of illustration are few. He spends some time on the uses of quotation, but only as a dignified evidence of authority and learning, not as an element of style.[66] He must have been conscious that he had the humorist's ability to imagine vivid contrasts and to phrase apt comparisons in concrete terms, but he makes no direct comment on figurative expression. In one place, it is true, he appears to be summing up the purposes of such ornament in one firm generalization—"Everything of which we can form an adequate opinion is considered by us comparatively with something else"—but he is speaking of various gradations in the understanding of an idea, not of effects in composition.[67] The only definite observation upon figures of speech occurs in the introduction to the earliest of the essays (*Hyp.* 10), and it is more a delighted ejaculation of wonder at the manner in which thoughts can be twisted than a serious remark upon a quality of style:

> It is curious to observe . . . . how an original allegory or metaphor, however remote in reality from the subject to which it is applied, may have the appearance of similarity or connection in a numerous variety of particulars.

That is all, except for the passage in which he praises Locke for

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Boswell adds pensively,

> I cannot help thinking the first stanza very good solemn poetry, as also the three first lines of the second.

[65] *Hyp.* 27. Boswell's feeling may have resulted from his admiration of Dr. Johnson's style, which he knew to be full of allusion and illustration (*Life of J.*, 3. 493 n. 3). In *Hyp.* 12, Boswell identifies "illustration and wisdom" with the philosophic attitude. See also *Life of J.*, 2. 244 and 503, for further comment on the uses of allusion and illustration.

[66] *Hyp.* 21, 22. See discussion in the preceding section of this study.

[67] *Hyp.* 8. Boswell's constant practice in making comic or somewhat poetic combinations of ideas can be seen in his *Boswelliana*, *Tour to the Hebrides*, and *Life of Johnson*. See especially *Hebr.*, 151, 298, 332; *Life of J.*, *passim*, but especially 3. 385—an occasion on which Boswell applauded his own efforts.

creating "beautiful composition, at once intelligible, pathetic, and richly figured."[68]

From time to time Boswell offers opinions upon method in composing, but they are not numerous, and they are decidedly loose. The essay form itself seems to have had but vague shape in his mind; his nearest approach to a definition of it is his remark in the first essay that if listless readers are able to "run over only a few pages," they are better off if "they can have in that space something entire and unbroken." In the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth papers, he condemns those authors who throw an air of mystery about their craft by an insistence upon endless criticism and revision, and asserts that spontaneity is the chief charm in composition. He supports this attitude by a declaration that writing should not be considered more mysterious or difficult than a pleasant intimate chat with sympathetic acquaintances, and to that end establishes a lack of fixed form as a characteristic of his "monthly lucubrations."[69] In spite of his observation that the gentle reader is too little considered by writers generally,[70] he reminds his audience several times that he writes to "please himself—that is to say, indulge his own inclination,"[71] and announces his intention to digress or enlarge at will—even to replace himself by another author on occasion.[72]

The flimsiness of these standards, combined with the portentous solemnity of Boswell's taste for the gloomy style, does not promise much good in practical application, and it is perfectly true that many of the essays in the series are weak or dull or strained in effect. But, on the other hand, his saner desire for "pleasing grace of novelty" and "fresh colouring" provides the vivid quality which the world associates with his name. Many of his essays are

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[68] *Hyp.* 67.

[69] *Hyp.* 12, 27, 30, 38, 41.

[70] *Hyp.* 1.

[71] *Hyp.* 16, 60. See also his limitation of material at the beginning of his article on the Stratford Jubilee in honor of Shakespeare, printed in the London Magazine for September 1769:

> I shall not follow a regular method of narrating the proceedings exactly, but just mention what made impression upon myself; that is the best rule for every man to follow, if he wishes to entertain.

[72] *Hyp.* 31.

filled with the authentic Boswellian sparkle, many with shrewd force, some with singular artistic feeling. An examination of the essays ranged in these types will, I think, reveal an unconscious but decided progress in Boswell's style. His development may be loosely divided into three stages, which I shall call early, middle, and late; it is not an entirely chronological arrangement, however, since some of the blemishes in the earliest papers are repeated in the latest numbers of *The Hypochondriack*, and some of the excellencies of the final stage exist in the first papers of the main series.

Boswell's early stage is made up of two separate parts bearing a resemblance to each other—that of three essays written for the Public Advertiser, reprinted in the series,[73] and that of the essays comparable to them in the series itself. The reprinted essays suffer in comparison with the others; they are inspired by nothing but boisterous fun and the resolute waggery which characterizes Boswell's letters to Erskine. Two are based on some topic of the day—the papers on the new freezing discovery and on identification by numbered tags (*Hyp.* 47, 49); the other, on truth (*Hyp.* 10), is full of topical allusions. All three are expressed with heavy, good-natured satire, and all are developed by an exaggerated use of the stylistic trick which Boswell applauds—the illustration of an idea by a series of imaginative instances. The paper on truth is a mass of metaphors and petty allegory; the other two essays are lists of illustrations adapted from the social life of the day, the persons satirized being so reduced to type that they assume a quality of figurative expression.

The tremendous sophistication of these essays would place them, if nothing else did; they were written when Boswell aspired to be a giddy man-about-town, anxious to show his perfect acquaintance with all the topics and scandals of the day. The humor in them, too, is very different from that of the later ones; it never

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[73] *Hyp.* 10, 47, 49. The fourth of the reprinted papers, on executions (*Hyp.* 68), can scarcely be said to belong to this first stage at all in attitude and tone; it is serious, reflective, and full of evidence that Boswell had read a good deal on the phase of the subject which chiefly attracted him—the cause of the desire to witness such spectacles. It has one characteristic, however, which should be mentioned with those of the early papers: a large part of it is devoted to a journalistic report of the last execution which Boswell had attended. None of the later essays contains a circumstantial narrative of this type.

lacks the true Boswellian relish, but it is more physical than intellectual, directed to subjects conventionally set apart for public jocoseness, and offering flat and dreadful approaches to punning.

The essays which correspond most nearly to the characteristics of the frivolous reprinted papers are found chiefly among the first two dozen numbers of *The Hypochondriack*, and in such scattered examples after that as the essays on hypochondria and on dedication (*Hyp.* 39, 61). They seem to be loose jottings of ideas, with no regard for conventional form save an occasional moral reflection by way of conclusion. With one exception (*Hyp.* 20, on savages and the mode), Boswell deserts the typical social illustrations of the reprinted papers, and uses in this group instances taken from his reading and experience. He has not yet learned to slip them deftly into his composition, however. Frequently they are introduced with a laborious announcement, and concluded stiffly, with such phrasing as "This story may serve as a very good illustration of the ideas of comparative luxury."[74] The essays are usually introduced by some instance or quotation which acts as text for the whole paper; sometimes these adornments are so long and cumbersome as to overweight the paper with foreign material, or very nearly to lead the author from his main subject. This is particularly the case in the essay on censure (*Hyp.* 24),[75] which Boswell begins with an excellent apt instance from Phaedrus—the fancy that man was formed with a bag before him for the faults of others, and another behind him for his own. Instead of proceeding briskly to his theme, Boswell is struck by the clumsiness of the idea; suggests that it would be awkward in a painting; compares it to a Dutch picture, to a possible portrait of Aesop; he reflects, however, that the moral is just, and is thus led to make a short criticism of the elegant simplicity of Phaedrus; he begins a new paragraph, evidently with the intention of attacking his theme at once, but is again drawn away by his love of playing with ideas to suggest that the fable be altered by turning man's head to behold his own faults, or supplying him with a mirror. Here he remembers his true subject, and begins yet another new paragraph with unseemly abruptness: "I am afraid that to delight in censure is the general propensity of mankind."

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[74] See *Hyp.* 8, 11, 12, 13.

[75] See also *Hyp.* 7, 18.

This second division of the early period is marked, like the first one, by over-elaboration, but of a different type. The tone changes from boisterous fun to moralizing and florid sentimentality, or to patronizing sarcasms, usually emphasized by unnecessary italics.[76] The metaphorical quality found in the reprinted essays is paralleled here, partly by a vast number of consciously picturesque figurative expressions, and partly by a constant use of simple contrast and comparison, which Boswell loves to balance in every detail, however strained the effect may be. In the essay on excess (*Hyp.* 4) every instance given is balanced with its opposite throughout the paper until Boswell's mind has become so habituated to the rhythm of it that a group of simple phrases near the conclusion is—unconsciously, I think—set off in little balanced pairs:

> Everybody acknowledges without opposition, or contest upon nice distinctions, the justness of the phrases, too much talkativeness, too much silence, too much openness, too much reserve.[77]

In his middle stage, Boswell is still depending upon the tools of his early period. He employs figures and instances constantly, and brings out his ideas by means of comparison and contrast; but there is a noticeable difference in his method of using them. The development of a theme by a mere list of instances or comparisons and contrasts is no more. He is a little less the gay gossip or the man of feeling, and slowly he is approaching the state in which he can in truth consider his topic "philosophically . . . . with that degree of illustration and wisdom, which I am capable of doing, when in a calm and clear state of mind."[78]

His figures are less labored, much less ornate, and introduced with greater ease, than in the early period. Those which he extends at any length are easily defended because of their definite application and the reasonable quality of the comparison; he no longer strains to make the analogy at all points. Consider in this regard a figure in the essay on criticism (*Hyp.* 28):

> It may be thought that this self-criticism will always be exceedingly gentle, as Protestants are apt to represent the flagellation which Romish

[76] Particularly true of *Hyp.* 12, 18, 20.

[77] See also *Hyp.* 5, 8, 9, 11, 20, etc.

[78] *Hyp.* 12.

penitents administer to themselves. But this will depend much upon the different tempers of authours. One who is conceited and vain, will, like a hardened sinner, be insensible of his imperfections and faults, while one who is modest and diffident will, like a penitent whose heart is broken with contrition, be perhaps too severe in judging of his performance.

Sometimes he reduces his analogy to a single metaphorical expression which produces the very heart of the matter, frequently with a sense for the dramatic quality of surprise which is the essence of epigram.[79] In the essay on hospitality (*Hyp.* 58), Boswell shows this taste developed to a feeling for climax, with a concreteness of expression that has in it something of Swift's unsparing sudden strokes:

> Other animals take a pleasure in sharing the food they like best with their young, or even preferring them, but I believe man alone treats others of his species in that manner. . . . . I have therefore always thought it the mark of a brutish disposition to feed alone, or even to eat perpetually with one's family, which is comparatively unsocial, and makes one figure a group of beasts in the same den day after day.

Although the whole paragraph coheres properly, the beginning of it does not obviously prepare us for the end, which is just that much more effective. Notice too, the subtle and emphatic way in which the figurative is mingled with the actual in the single verb group *feed alone*—one almost hears the crunch of bones.

Boswell is equally happy in the setting and the employment of his instances, whether from his reading or his experience. If they are still used as mere illustration, he subordinates them to his theme by a craftsman-like sentence arrangement, as in his discussion of the way in which present needs keep us from thinking of death (*Hyp.* 14):

> [It is impossible to keep the mind fixed on the idea of death] without more than ordinary spiritual acquirements; and such are the unceasing effects of mere sensation and its consequences, that I question if even the monks of La Trappe, whose whole time is spent in the closest seclusion and silence, and exercises of solemn meditation and piety, are able in reality to fix their thoughts upon Death during any considerable part of each day.

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[79] See especially *Hyp.* 62, the remark upon buffoons.

Another time he states his theme, and gives his instances of illustration in short exclamatory sentences following it, breaking the monotony of straightforward statement, and relieving himself of any formal expression of comparison;[80] at other places he reduces his instances to their elements—almost pushing them out of the way, in order to pursue the main current of his idea.[81]

The most important advance, however, is the way in which Boswell employs all of these devices—figures, instances, contrast—to give his essays a coherent unity. In the second paper on parents and children (*Hyp.* 46), a fanciful idea introduces the subject:

> It has often occurred to me, that if children were rare, they would be valued beyond everything else we can possess. . . . . Suppose a man who had never seen a child, were to be thrown upon an island with no other inhabitants upon it at that time but children; how surprisingly would he be entertained with the little people, their language, their manners, their sentiments!

The main thread of the essay is developed from the contrast to this: "But we must be aware of allowing ourselves to think, that our children may be made to serve only as an amusement to us"; and the conclusion expresses in terms of actuality what the beginning of the essay had suggested in figurative form—the sadness of a household where children are a rarity. In any number of essays belonging to the middle period, Boswell begins his paper by an instance, a statement of general belief, or a definition, contrasts to them his own opinion, and pursues the essay, on the skeleton thus assembled, to a well-rounded conclusion, usually reminiscent of the introductory device or the motto.[82]

The humor of this period is no longer dependent upon either conceits or exaggeration for its power; it is in these papers of the middle stage that Boswell employs his anecdotes of the life around him most freely. There are but one or two touches of satire, so

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[80] *Hyp.* 35, on imitation, giving Sterne and Johnson as examples.

[81] *Hyp.* 43 treats very shortly the idea that love is *buried on the wedding day*, a theme which Boswell expands in full in *Hyp.* 13. See also *Hyp.* 35, in which Boswell gives an instance of sumptuary law, which is suppressed to a short point here but treated in full in *Hyp.* 8.

[82] See especially *Hyp.* 25, 41–43, 44, 48, 62.

slight as to be negligible; the rest is the merry, mellow quality of the *Life of Johnson* at its best, where Boswell has completely lost his conscious sophistication as either man-about-town or man of the world—he is too much occupied by his eager researches in unpretentious mere humanity.

If in the early stages of the essays Boswell was the self-conscious "artist,"[83] and in the middle the conscientious craftsman, he appears in the late stage of his periodical as the philosopher. Here he has finally attained a "calm and clear state of mind," neither unduly anxious about his style, worried about the number of instances he can include, nor particularly conscious of his structure; he is in eager pursuit of an abstract idea,[84] and the superficial matters upon which previously he had spent much of his energy pass out of his mind. As a result, we have a number of thoughtful essays, limpid and fluent in expression, brightly energetic in form, but chiefly concerned with the clear, distinct, happy analysis of ideas really worth while. These papers are more serious than some of the earlier ones, but they are far from prosy or dull; Boswell's ingenuity and fancy are still active. The difference lies in the fact that he employs them differently. He is not now building up or elaborating—he is dissecting. Taking a theme no more extraordinary than any he has used before, he separates it into its parts, examines it, lets his mind play over it, illustrates it by one or two definite allusions—usually quotations from some authority —and closes his paper with a summary of what he has said, or a rapid, happy phrase which makes the whole immediately vivid.[85] It is amusing to look back from this method to that of the earliest essays, in which he was making puppy-like dashes at analysis by means of his typical figures.

The directness of attack which has been growing throughout his periodical career comes to a natural climax here, in his instinctive desire to strike into the heart of his material at once. His beginnings are usually succinct old-fashioned *sententia*, such as

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[83] It is not only in the essays that this feeling is evident; in the *Boswelliana* he speaks of himself and Erskine as "these two poets."

[84] He begins the essay on words (*Hyp.* 53) with a statement of this pursuit:

> Words, the representations, or rather signs of ideas and emotions in the human race, though habitual to all of us, are, when abstractly considered, exceedingly wonderful.

[85] See especially *Hyp.* 40, 50, 53, 56, 64, 65.

"Hospitality is the virtue which in the most eminent degree brings its own reward,"[86] or short statements which do no more than present the subject. Even his more extended introductions are sharply and clearly phrased. A notable example is the new introduction which he wrote in 1783 for his old essay on executions (1768), reprinted in *The Hypochondriack* as number 68:

> The question, Whether society has a right to punish individuals, especially to the extent of death, which is well denominated in Latin "*ultimum supplicium*—the last or utmost punishment," has been treated with great attention by a number of casuists in law and in morals.

This is a decided contrast to the leisurely, balanced character of the beginning of the original essay:

> That the people of England possess that quality called good-nature, will not be denied by any man whose mind is not fretted by some real ills, or clouded by some fanciful ones. But it must be acknowledged that the people of England are, of all nations in the world, the most desirous of seeing spectacles of cruelty.[87]

Once launched, Boswell carries his reader quickly along in these latest essays, chiefly by rapid glances from one part of the theme to the next, the paragraphs commencing with direct sentences much like those that introduce the entire paper. In several of the later essays, however, he seems instinctively to have adopted the device of transition from part to part, as a means of making the divisions of his subject immediately clear, and progressing lightly as well as rapidly.[88] To make his transition simple, he occasionally employs summaries in the division of an essay, to review what has gone before and to introduce his next diviison. His conclusions are brief and direct—in some cases pointed with sudden humor, usually at his own expense. A pleasant instance is the ending of the first essay on wealth (*Hyp.* 56):

> . . . . few men borrow what they can conveniently pay on demand, and

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[86] *Hyp.* 58. See also *Hyp.* 52, 65, 67, 69.

[87] It is to be remembered that the essay itself, though it is one of the reprinted essays, does not belong to the earliest stage of Boswell's writing. See *supra.* I am inclined to place it with the middle group, since he weaves into his subject by means of contrasted ideas.

[88] *Hyp.* 58, 65, especially.

therefore, the wise man says "the borrower is the servant to the lender." By being a gentle creditor, a rich man may have all the homage which is willingly paid to power mildly used. Enough has been said for wealth. —In short, the Hypochondriack is resolved to be rich.[89]

Of the devices which Boswell used so freely in the early period, few have retained their original character or importance. The figures, which had occurred as frequently as nine or ten times in a single paper at the beginning of the series, have dwindled to one or two; in several of the latest papers there is none at all. The instances are in much the same relation to the theme as they were in Boswell's middle stage—sometimes fully developed, and sometimes reduced to their very elements. Examples of both appear in the essay on change (*Hyp.* 64); in the first part he gives, as an instance of taste in gardening, a long quotation from the *Scots Gardener*, and in the last, a mere statement of references for examples in point. On occasion Boswell so reduces his instances that they closely approach the typical figures of his earliest stage, but he avoids the flat obviousness of the reprinted essays by means of mature restraint, and the individual quality given by his skilful use of adjective:

> Were an accurate table to be made out with various columns, in which upon a fair computation the portions of Time appropriated to eating, drinking, sleeping, conversation, ſtudy, business, amusements, in short, all the several modes of exiſtence were to be marked, we should be surprised to see the short duration, the small quantity of any thing which has either our love or our approbation. It would be found that some of the moſt diſtinguished speakers in Parliament have not spoken two months; that some of the moſt brilliant, fine ladies of the court, have not been admired above a quarter of a year; nay, that some of the oldeſt and moſt intimate friends have not seen one another for a twelvemonth in the whole.[90]

Comparison and contrast scarcely appear at all, as devices of style; there are not more than one or two occurrences in each of

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[89] See also *Hyp.* 27, 28, 32, 52, 66.

[90] *Hyp.* 65. The basis of this idea is found in *The Rambler*, number 8, but it is interesting to see how Boswell, even when most restrained, touches Dr. Johnson's sonorous abstractions into vivid life. Noteworthy here, too, is the subtle effect of climax, which turns the idea suddenly from jest to a delicate reserved pathos. It is possible that Boswell is thinking of his relations with Dr. Johnson in this regard.

these mature papers. In those cases where Boswell employs comparative expression, it is with a sober hand—he is obviously using it as a means of making his theme clear, rather than as an added ornament. The two parts of his comparison are more nearly similar than the parts of his figures used to be; there is no effort to strike the reader by a daring juxtaposition of utterly unlike ideas. Contrast, in its very rare appearances as a stylistic method, is equally restrained; as a formal rhetorical tool, assisting his analysis, it is still occasionally employed, but for the most part the easy division of subject and the transitional expressions take its place.[91]

Boswell's development is not a conscious one, as we can see from three facts: first, his change of style is not marked in regular steps of progression compatible with the chronology of the essays; secondly, the obvious hurry in which the papers were written precluded any thorough polishing of the pieces as they were turned off;[92] thirdly, the revision Boswell did make is a slight matter of proof-reading or of correcting small details of fact merely.[93]

These may be the reasons why Boswell's dicta on artistic beauties have little effect on his style; he may have felt that he had not time to curry his Pegasus. He may have felt unworthy to imitate Locke, Blair, Hervey, and the rest whom he admired. He may have felt that the beauties he applauded had no place in essay-writing, although he does not say so. On the other hand, Boswell adheres strictly to the better part of his standards for essay-writing, probably because they suited his nature well, the chief requisites being spontaneity, variety, and the impression of

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[91] See *Hyp.* 64, 65.

[92] For instance, Boswell occasionally makes an awkward repetition of ideas which mars the framework of the whole paper, as in *Hyp.* 61, which clumsily duplicates the thought that there is no better reason for dedicating than the expectation of beneficence; or in *Hyp.* 67, where Boswell twice stops his process of thinking out an idea, with the observation that we must await the enlightenment which will follow death.

[93] Boswell adds *errata* at the end of many essays in correction of the preceding paper; except his instruction to omit Ferrara from a list of cities which, in *Hyp.* 8, he had mentioned as having sumptuary laws, all the corrections are simple changes of typographical errors. The revision of which he speaks as preceding the insertion of the reprinted essays in the series is of the same type; no changes for clearness, grace, or force are apparent.

intimate talk with the reader. He attains the desired ends by writing for the most part with directness and perfect naturalness and candor, all of these assisted by his characteristic tendency to use matters of fact as the channels of his thinking. He rarely brings out an idea by means of esoteric abstractions; he vivifies abstractions by comparison to simple concrete things. The consequence in his style is at once his limitation and his glory. He could not stretch his mind successfully after the truths beyond fact, but he saved himself thereby from a great deal of the flimsy sentimentality of his day, and made himself within his limits a master of terse and vivid style, in which no words are wasted and no effects lost.

We do not find the style in perfection in all, or even in a great number of these essays, but we can see how Boswell is achieving it through the constant repetition of his monthly task. The papers which began as joyous *tours de force* change (slowly and irregularly, to be sure) into firm units of idea, which Boswell caused to revolve before his mind's eye, discarding in the action all the superfluities and loose ends of the first papers. It is this perception of the relation that he should bear to his subject, this definite separation between necessities and ornament, that characterize any mature artist; how much it counted in the artistry of Boswell may be seen in such incomparable later writing as the scene at Dilly's dinner-party, the graphic strokes of Mrs. Williams's finger in the tea-cup, Johnson beating his books and roaring for a clean shirt, Hodge pawing at his master's lapels. There is very little in all these of Boswell's explanatory comment—he lets his concrete detail speak for itself. But I doubt that without the six years of the essays, gradually and unconsciously deepening in analytical power, it would have spoken so distinctly or so well.

From the engraving by Dürer

The Hypochondria of Earlier Ages

III. BOSWELL AND HIS AUDIENCE

I. THE VICTIMS OF THE ENGLISH MALADY

When Boswell in his final essay expressed a hope that he had some readers "so habituated to sympathize with the soul of the Hypochondriack, that the instant of our being personally known to each other there would be a cordial friendship between us," he was not assuming the position taken by the authors of *René* and *Werther* later in the century. He did not in the least consider himself a storm-tossed soul, unique and hence misunderstood, appealing for pity and love with the gloomy certainty that he would never find them. Boswell's accent was all on his word *habituated;* he was simply expressing a hope that he had had constant readers. Sympathy for his hypochondria he could take for granted, since, as he says in his first number, "in England . . . . the malady known by the denomination of melancholy, hypochondria, spleen, or vapours, has long been supposed to be almost universal." It is possible that Boswell was mistaken in his estimate of the number of actual sufferers from the affliction, but he was right in assuming that his essays would find a complacent reception "in the library of the divine, in the drawing room of the matron, and on the toilet of the young lady." And not only did general society in Boswell's England believe itself interestingly melancholy; English and continental men of science regarded low spirits as a national defect, and the common term for almost any form of depression, peevishness, pensiveness, restlessness, languor, gloom, despair, the "spleen," the "vapors," or actual mania, was "the English Malady."[1]

For centuries melancholy or hypochondria had been considered a disease, but it was not until the seventeenth century that the affliction was thought to be almost exclusively English. Allusions to melancholy madness (usually the result of distaste for erring mankind, and devotion to esoteric learning) were frequent in classic authors, and it is no doubt this classic sanction which stimu-

[1] See *Hyp.* 32, 61, 63, for books which Boswell mentions on the disease. Dr. Cheyne's book, *The English Malady* (1733), which prescribed diet as a cure, was a favorite with Dr. Johnson, who recommended it to Boswell (*Life of J.*, 3. 31, 99).

lated so many references to languid pensiveness among Renaissance writers. The "melancholy humor" which played so great a part in the psychological system of the English Renaissance was usually the expression of a learned and sardonically critical spirit, disgusted with the follies of the world, just as in classic times. In all of these instances, however, melancholy was accepted as a common human tendency; Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy,* calls it "an inbred malady in every one of us," and even traces its existence in "vegetals and sensibles," and "kingdoms, provinces, and bodies politic." Certainly it was not assumed to be the peculiar characteristic of any nation.[2] The exact time when it became accepted as the distinguishing mark of the English nature cannot be set. Burton, who treated the subject of melancholy in the general fashion I have suggested, died in 1639–40, after seeing five editions of his popular work through the press and preparing a sixth; somewhere between the period of these publications and the end of the century, the notion that restless and hopeless gloom was a disease peculiar to their nation had become a fixed belief among Englishmen. Before 1700, Sir William Temple observed that England is "the region of the spleen," with the result that "[we are] unequal in our humours, inconstant in our passions,

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[2] *Anatomy of Melancholy,* Democritus Junior to the Reader (*ca.* p. 50). Saintsbury believes that the tendency to melancholy in the English Renaissance was rather "the natural reaction following upon the high and fantastic hopes of the earlier Renaissance, and ushering in the prosaic and slightly vulgar limitation to low aims of the late seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century." He adds, however, that there was "a very strong dash of humor" in the writing even of the melancholy men in the English Renaissance (*A Short History of English Literature,* 379). Even admitting this point of view, and remembering further the sincere expression of melancholy feeling in Sidney's somber letters to Languet, the wild repentances of Greene, or the moody violence of Webster and Tourneur, it must be noted that the tendency was understood to be a matter of one's constitution or circumstances, not of one's nationality.

In general, the feeling of the mass of Elizabethan Englishmen is represented in Jaques of *As You Like It,* the jest of the grave-digger in *Hamlet* upon the "mad English," or, later, in Fletcher's "nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy" or Milton's *Il Penseroso.* It was not regarded as a debilitating national trait. See Peers, *Elizabethan Drama and Its Mad Folk,* especially the chapter on *Melancholy.*

uncertain in our ends, and even in our desires";[3] Congreve and John Dennis, in their replies to Jeremy Collier's attacks on Restoration comedy, asserted that Englishmen needed broader and stronger comedy than men of other nations because they were pre-eminently melancholy.[4] Congreve's remarks are particularly emphatic:

> Is there in the world a climate more uncertain than our own? And, which is a natural consequence, is there anywhere a people more unsteady, more apt to discontent, more saturnine, dark and melancholic than ourselves? Are we not of all people the most unfit to be alone, and most unsafe to be trusted with ourselves? Are there not more self-murderers and melancholic lunatics in England, heard of in one year, than in a great part of Europe besides?

Throughout the eighteenth century, it is curious to see how the idea grows in scope, drawing to itself many tendencies and attitudes of mind which had before been considered quite independent. Lady Winchilsea, writing before 1709 a poem called *The Spleen*,[5] referred to the malady as "black jaundice," and found it the excuse or the accompaniment of suspicion, sensitive retirement, stupid discontent, or "panick fear"; in its more powerful effects it veiled religion in darkness, "with anxious Doubts, with endless Scruples vext," and caused those who would cure its vague terrors to fall a prey to it themselves. *The Spectator* (1711–12, 1714) contained numerous references to "that gloominess and melancholy of temper which is so frequent in our nation," ascribing it to the idleness of "fine people" and to the weather (especially to the strong east winds in spring and autumn), and asserting that Shakespeare's power in fantasy and the supernatural made him particularly acceptable to the "weak, superstitious" minds of sufferers from the national ailment. In 1711, a satiric number of *The Spectator* drew a distinction between the older conception of melancholy and the new; however jesting the tone in which it is expressed, the passage is important because it shows a consciousness of the change that has taken place:

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[3] "Of Poetry" (*Works*, 3. 440).

[4] Congreve, *Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect Citations*; Dennis, *Usefulness of the Stage* (both 1698).

[5] *The Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea*, ed. Myra Reynolds.

I am a gentleman who for many years paſt have been well known to be truly splenetic, and that my spleen arises from having contracted so great a delicacy, by reading the moſt refined authors and keeping the moſt refined company, that I cannot bear the leaſt impropriety of language, or ruſticity of behaviour. Now, Sir, I have ever looked upon this as a wise diſtemper; but by late observations find, that every heavy wretch who has nothing to say, excuses his dulness by complaining of the spleen. Nay, I saw the other day two fellows in a tavern kitchen, ... only by guzzling liquor to each other's health, and waſting smoke in each other's face, pretend to throw off the spleen. I appeal to you whether these dishonors are to be done to the diſtemper of the great and polite. I beseech you, Sir, to inform these fellows that they have not the spleen because they cannot talk without the help of a glass at their mouths, or convey their meaning to each other without the interposition of clouds. If you will not do this with all speed, I assure you, for my part, I will wholly quit the disease, and for the future be merry with the vulgar.[6]

Before 1730, Thomson confused melancholy with virtue and religion, intimating that these refinements of the spirit are possible only in solitary retreats away from the "degenerate crowd," or at the very least in a densely shaded spot; here mysterious voices will whisper religious exhortations to the recluse, and Philosophic Melancholy (a sort of gusty, expansive sympathy with the distant woes of others) will produce a mystic love of mankind, nature, God, fame, virtue, one's country, etc., and a host of kind wishes for them all.[7] Matthew Green created a parallel to this idea in his very popular poem, *The Spleen* (1737),[8] in which he mentions among other symptoms of the disease, an indulgence in the bodiless visions of Böhme's "enthusiast" disciples. Melancholy and pity became the source of the warmest poetic passions in such writers as Collins and the brothers Warton, and by the middle of the century a group of "gloomy sentimental enquirers"[9] caused night, darkness, and majestic landscape to produce a confusion of awe, ecstasy, and horrors difficult for the modern reader to accept in the lump, and equally difficult to disentangle. A school of

[6] *The Spectator*, 53. See also numbers 336, 419, 425, 440, 547, 558, 599.

[7] *The Seasons*—especially *Summer* and *Autumn*.

[8] In Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*.

[9] As Boswell himself called them (*Life of J.*, 3. 181). Akenside and Beattie were popular among them.

writers, led by Robert Blair and Edward Young[10] (*ca.* 1740), drew attention with unseemly detail to the horrors of the grave, and the moral virtue to be acquired by dwelling upon them in the cemetery itself. Even the gardens were made more consciously shaded and "wild," and there developed a technique of gardening which supplied cliffs, precipices, cascades—even ruins—to order, thus bringing an elegantly cheerless scene close to the drawing-room windows.[11] The most extreme element in the agitation concerning melancholy was the belief that Englishmen were committing suicide in a wholesale manner.[12] The humorists refused to take the national distress so seriously as the poets (although the robust Fielding gives a sympathetic description of one of its phases;[13] but the frequency of their references to it in magazine

[10] Blair was famous for one poem, *The Grave*, so popular as to survive to the end of the century and be illustrated by William Blake; Young was known chiefly by his *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts*. Boswell's opinion of him is one common to the age: "My estimation [of him] is such as to reckon his applause an honor even to Johnson." (*Life of J.*, 1. 249.)

[11] See Reynolds, *Nature in English Poetry*. Gilpin and Mason were the chief exponents of the "picturesque" garden. Mason, in his *English Garden*, deprecated the actual building of ruins, but expressed his belief that any man is "most happy" to possess on his grounds the genuine fragments of an abbey or fortress. Gilpin criticized the ruins of Shuckburgh because they were "not well fabricated"; he allowed, however, that it was "not every man, who can build a house, that can execute a ruin."

The seriousness with which the fad was accepted appears even in the letters of the dilettante Walpole (*Letters of Horace Walpole*, 2. 352):

> There is extreme taſte [at Hagley]: . . . . there is not one absurdity. There is a ruined caſtle, built by Miller, that would get him his freedom, even of Strawberry: it has the true ruſt of the Barons' Wars.

The moral implications of the taste are treated with becoming gravity by Lord Kames, the friend of Boswell, in his *Elements of Criticism*, chap. 24:

> Whether should be a ruin in the Gothic or Grecian form? In the former, I think; because it exhibits the triumph of time over ſtrength; a melancholy, but not unpleasant thought: a Grecian ruin ſuggeſts rather the triumph of barbarity over taſte; a gloomy and discouraging thought.

[12] See Young, *Night Thoughts*, 5: "O Britain! Infamous for suicide!"—and Brown, *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757), in which the heroic suicide of the Romans and the fatuous or cowardly suicide of the English are contrasted. The common acceptance of the idea can be seen in an anecdote of Boswell's, upon two Prussian soldiers who were said to have died of "the English distemper" because they had hanged themselves (*Boswelliana*, 313).

[13] In *Amelia* (1751), 3. 7. Boswell cites the passage in *Hyp.* 5.

verse, essays, and collections such as Dodsley's anthology (1748–58) shows the common acceptance of the idea that a blight had fallen upon the British. Goldsmith's Chinese cosmopolite, Fum Hoam, calling upon the Man in Black, finds him dolefully performing upon a German flute as a palliative for melancholy, and observes gravely that the disease is prevalent all over England: "When the men of England are once turned of thirty, they retire every year, at proper intervals, to lie in of the spleen."[14] Among the poor, the disease manifests itself in drink and quarreling, but among the rich it appears as a complete lack of energy—"they become totally unfit for opposition." He adds an enlightening paragraph on the symptoms of the Man in Black, who describes himself thus:

> I threw down the book [on the devices of thief-takers] in an agony of rage, and began to think with malice of all the human kind. I sat silent for some minutes, and soon perceiving the ticking of my watch beginning to grow noisy and troublesome, I quickly placed it out of hearing, and ſtrove to resume my serenity. But the watchman soon gave me a second alarm. I had scarcely recovered from this, when my peace was assaulted by the wind at my window; and when that ceased to blow, I liſtened for death watches in the wainscot. I now found my whole syſtem discomposed. I ſtrove to find a resource in philosophy and reason; but what could I oppose, or where direct my blow, when I could see no enemy to combat? I saw no misery approaching, nor knew any I had to fear, yet ſtill I was miserable.

Oddly enough, the attitude of many Frenchmen served to encourage and develop this morbidity in the English. The moral, philosophic note appealed to a certain school of writers such as Muralt and Prévost, and even to the youthful enthusiasm of Voltaire. A positive Anglomania was the result; in order to be known as a thoughtful man it was necessary to adopt English fashions in dress, in deportment, even in gardening. French satirists wrote scathing assaults upon the fashion,[15] but all their jests could not move Diderot and Mercier from their delight in the sensitive, sober, moralizing English, nor prevent Ducis from

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[14] *Citizen of the World* (1760–61), numbers 90, 91, 92. See also *The Bee*, 7. 5, and *The Spectator*, 387.

[15] See de Boissy's parody on Voltaire's *Ériphyle*, in which he ridicules Voltaire's imitation of English stage ghosts; his *Le Français à Londres*; Favart's

speaking in praise of their mournful genius before the Academy.[16] Locke and Pope became dictators of French opinion in this sympathetic circle, and strangely enough, Shakespeare and Edward Young were accepted together as representative British poets.

An index of the times is the fact that *Hamlet* obscured most of the other Shakesperean plays, and that the graveyard scene (quite misunderstood) obscured all the rest of *Hamlet!* In 1748 Montesquieu maintained that English melancholia and the English constitution were both parts of the indomitable English love of freedom;[17] in 1758, Rousseau (whose "passionate virtue," dreamy sympathies, and restless yearnings were largely developed from his admiration of English contemporary literature)[18] observed that both men and women in England were fond of taciturnity, both difficult to affect, "but when affected, agitated to extremes: it frequently determines the fate of their lives; the consequence, says Muralt, is nothing less than the loss of reason or life."[19] Among the French reading public in general, the feeling seems to have been half approval, half astonishment; there was a general con-

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L'Anglois à Bordeaux; the anonymous *Préservatif contre L'Anglomanie;* and, most charming and pointed of all, Saurin's *L'Anglomane:*

Damis: Jamais je ne ris.
Éraste: O, cet homme eſt bien anglais,
Bien bon.
Damis: On rit de tout chez les français;
Sachez, monsieur, qu'en Angleterre
On se pend quelquefois; mais on n'y rit jamais.
Éraste: Ah! si dans ce pays j'avois un coin de terre!
—Sc. 2.

Éraste: Chespir [Shakespeare] soit; mais en tout j'admire sa manière.
J'aime des fossoyeurs qui, dans un cimitière
Moralisent gaiement sur des têtes de morts;
Nous n'avons rien chez nous de si philosophiques.
Nos esprits, pour cela, ne sont pas assez forts.
—Sc. 12.

[16] For a general discussion of the subject, see Texte, *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit in Literature,* 1899.

[17] *Spirit of the Laws,* 1. 249. It is noteworthy that in this passage Montesquieu, like Brown, contrasts the suicide of Romans (who killed themselves for grave reasons and from the trend of their education) and that of the English who "destroy themselves even in the bosom of happiness."

[18] Especially Richardson, Addison and Steele, and DeFoe. See Texte, *op. cit.*

[19] In his *Lettre à D'Alembert.* He is quoting Muralt's *Lettres sur les Anglais,* 3.

viction, however, that the English mind must be essentially sturdy to endure the oppression of its melancholy.[20]

It is not to be assumed that all England lay in this inglorious state. Like the Man in Black, the thinking men of the period made every effort to diagnose their distemper, but like him, they found it difficult to get at the root of their discomfort. The fundamental cause of their uneasiness was too large and vague for them to realize it distinctly: it was, in short terms, the loss of the central authority, either of church or state, under which men had lived for centuries. The Elizabethans, much closer to the destructive effects of the Renaissance and Reformation, had felt somewhat the sensation of being at loose ends, but the Tudor kings had fostered a passionate sense of nationalism, which had served as a rallying device even for the iconoclasts who scouted church and throne, and the stirring sense of new life evoked by the discoveries of the period had kept it vitally awake. In the eighteenth century, those very discoveries were dulling this intensely national spirit—England was on her way to empire, and men's interests, spreading in war and trade, did not concentrate upon Britain alone, as they had done; the last illusions of personal devotion to the reigning house had vanished in the Revolution of 1688; and the effects of stern individualistic Puritanism, combined with the Baconian experimental philosophy, troubled the foundations of men's faith, making the old concrete symbols and the old centralized authority lifeless and hollow.[21] None of the philosophers of the eighteenth century grasped these facts as a whole, and it is astonishing to see how few touched upon any fundamental point in their discussion of it: the Tories blamed conditions upon the Whigs, and the Whigs retorted upon the Tories; everybody joined in mocking at

[20] See Baculard d'Arnaud, Preface to *Comte de Comminges;* the address accompanying de Bissy's translation of Young's *Night Thoughts;* the introduction to Le Tourneur's *Les Nuits d'Young;* Mme Riccoboni to Garrick (*Garrick Corresp.*, 2. 566); Mme de Genlis, *Mémoires*, 3. 353; Mme de Staël, *De la Littérature*, chaps. 11, 13. Chateaubriand, at the end of the century, expresses a mixture of admiration and horror at English literature (*English Literature*, vol. 2); Girardin, writing as late as 1845, attributes the gloom of the English not to climate alone, but to the influence of Shakespeare (*Cours de la Littérature Dramatique*, 1. 48).

[21] For a full and excellent discussion of these topics, see Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2. 350 ff.

the "enthusiasts" of religious sects or at the skeptic philosophers, without seeing that the actual source of trouble lay far below these things. The causes assigned to the uneasiness of the age, even by the profoundest minds, are characterized by a piteous inadequacy.

Johnson's unsparing common sense brought him nearest to the actual facts; Tory though he was, he placed the blame on the enfeebled status of the crown.[22] Others preferred to accept the diagnosis of Montesquieu, and resign themselves to misery because of their stern climate. Young and the moral poets inveighed against defiant atheism. But the cry in which almost every voice joined was the protest against "Luxury, thou curs'd by Heav'n's decree!" Scarcely a volume in the files of any magazine is without at least one essay, or "remarks," on the subject; clergymen, poets, satirists,[23] politicians, even physicians, dwelt upon luxury as the chief cause of all the ills that flesh of the eighteenth century was heir to. A note of dismay was added to the general outcry by Estimate Brown, who alleged that cowardice had become a leading trait of the English because of their luxury. He asserted that it created a breach in the spirit of public defense, because it induced "*low Spirits* and *nervous Disorders*, whose natural and unalterable Character is that of *Fear*."[24]

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[22] *Life of J.*, 3. 4 (1776); see also 3. 177, and 4. 190 (1783).

[23] Even the clear-headed Swift; see the *Voyage to the Houyhnhms* in *Gulliver's Travels*—the discussion of English civilization between Gulliver and his master.

[24] John Brown (nicknamed by the title of his famous book, after the custom of the day), *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757), 1. 89. This extraordinary book had considerable effect because of the hairbreadth success of the English against the Pretender and the Scotch in 1745—the narrow margin of victory gave point to Brown's contention that lethargy, caused by luxurious life, was undermining the defensive spirit of the British. Echoes of the thesis appeared for years afterward. The Critical Review for April 1758 offers a very satiric article on the second volume of the work, which would seem to show that it was not universally considered impressive. However, in the London Magazine for July 1777 there is an *Ironical Defence of Luxury* which emphasizes Brown's idea that luxury and national defense are incompatible:

> I think I have now clearly shewn that those writers [on the enervating effects of luxury] have argued on wrong principles; for how can we give proofs of our riches, but by our splendid manner of dress and living? and our natural enemies the French will always dread our power from the great display of our riches, insomuch that the strongest proof our

While the causes of the English Malady were still a matter of disagreement among the thinkers of the eighteenth century, any number of cures for it were suggested by the intellectual quacks, especially among the men of feeling. In the early years of the century the remedy was sought in a resolute code of moral virtue, but this had been swept into the stream of gloomy expression so early that it can scarcely be considered as a form of relief.[25] Two currents of rationalistic thought persisted, however—the utilitarianism of the scientists, and Deism. In the minds of the general mass of readers and writers in the eighteenth century these two philosophies became vaguely confused, the accent falling largely upon the sentimental aspects of Deism; the result is typified in Pope's famous "Whatever is, is right." These tea-table philosophers magnified to a point of absurdity the premise of Leibnitz that this must be the best of all possible worlds; saw immanent Deity in the meanest flower that blew, the wildest savage that followed his natural impulses; and so, by inevitable steps, became the prophets of the cult which finally eclipsed all others as a panacea for the wretchedness of mankind—the return to the "simple" or "natural" state in all things.[26]

Mrs. Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688) was the first popular work which celebrated the virtues of the savage. Her untutored hero surpassed Europeans not only in strength and agility, but in honor, fidelity, and refined passion or "sensibility"; it is true, however,

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ministers can give of their good policy, is, by encouraging dissipation in all ranks of people to keep our enemies quiet, from their presumption of our great power.

For a note on Brown and his ironically consistent end see *Hyp.* 62 n. 11.

[25] See the remarks on Thomson, Blair, and Young in the first part of this discussion.

[26] In the middle of the seventeenth century the new deserts of America were already looked upon as a refuge from the turmoil surrounding the fall of the Stuarts. In 1656, for instance, Abraham Cowley wrote in the preface to his collected poems:

> My desire has been for years past . . . . to retire myself to some of our American plantations, not to seek for gold, ... but to forsake this world forever, with all the vanities and vexations of it, and to bury myself there in some obscure retreat, but not without the consolation of letters and philosophy.

In his last clause Cowley shows the difference between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; he required still the pleasures of civilized life, and idealized nothing but solitude and peace. Those who followed him sought their ideal in the life of the savage himself.

that the authoress emphasized the princely station of Oroonoko in his native home. DeFoe, in his *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), popular from the moment of its publication, rejected this compromise, and depicted life in its absolutely primitive terms. DeFoe may have intended the work to be appealing because of its moral tone,[27] but the host of Robinsoniads that followed it show where the real source of delight lay: that a man from contemporary society should be able to create a little civilization out of nothing, and to appear idyllically happy in it, seemed to give earnest of the intrinsic sweetness of human nature when unhampered by the deadening complexities of European life; and that he should find such a type as Friday in the wilderness served to confirm the point. Friday is a second Oroonoko, without the princely caste; he is the completely natural man, with all the fine qualities of mankind and none of the flaws, which are thus assumed to be the product of civilization. These ideas, as well as the melancholy mania, crossed to the continent and made a powerful impression upon the most extraordinary mind of the day. Rousseau had an exaggerated passion for *Robinson Crusoe;* he knew it from cover to cover himself, and—as supplying a neat compendium of his philosophy of nature, which was without doubt partly an outcome of his love for the book—gave it the honor of being the entire library of Émile. As in the case of melancholy, the idea which had gone to France in more or less fantastic guise came back to England confirmed and established as a cult. In the latter half of the century, when English captains brought home savages from the remote parts of the world, the primitives were observed by the intellectuals with patient hope that they would show some evidences of natural man's happy perfection, and people of all classes struggled to get a glimpse of them.[28]

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[27] See Jusserand, *The English Novel*, 123: "There are sermons in DeFoe, who strongly protested against some abbreviations of his *Robinson Crusoe*." DeFoe's preface to the second part of the romance is the protest alluded to: "They strip it of all those reflections as well religious as moral, which are not only the greatest beauties of the work, but are calculated for the infinite advantage of the reader." How far DeFoe really meant this, it is hard to tell.

[28] For a brief sketch of the natural men thus observed, see Tinker, *Nature's Simple Plan* (Vanuxem Lectures, Princeton 1922), lecture 1. The genteel audience was happy enough to find simple virtues in primitive man, but it was

In the work of Thomas Gray, covering the middle years of the century, new elements were added to the passion for simplicity. He did not search out the gentle savage of Arcadian wilds as an amiable type; instead he went to a country churchyard, where he wrote his famous *Elegy* upon the simple untutored peasant of the English countryside.[29] In the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* he altered the scene to a school-yard, where he observed the children with mournful sympathy for their doomed innocence, and with a pronounced envy of their irresponsible happiness. The climax of feeling for simplicity appears in the conclusion of this poem, not surpassed by any extravagance of the period:

> No more: where ignorance is bliss
> 'Tis folly to be wise.

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overjoyed if it could detect any evidences of delicacy as well. The most popular of these gentle savages was the Tahitian Omai, who sang for the Burneys, was mistaken for a person of genteel position by Dr. Johnson, and had his portrait painted several times by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Timbs, in his *Century of Anecdote* (p. 29), tells the story of two "black princes of Anamaboe [who] were in fashion at all the assemblies," probably because, as he tells us, "their story was much like that of Oroonoko." On one occasion, after they had been "received in the highest circles, and introduced to the king," they appeared at Covent Garden theater to see the tragedy of *Oroonoko*, a dramatization of the novel:

> They were received with a loud clap of applause, which they returned with a genteel bow. The tender interview between Imoinda and Oroonoko so affected the Prince, that he was obliged to retire at the end of the fourth act. His companion remained, but wept all the time so bitterly, that it affected the audience more than the play.

Captain Cartwright, who brought a number of Eskimos to England from Labrador in 1772, has left a telling note on his first days at home, in his *Journal of Transactions and Events . . . . on the Coast of Labrador* (1792):

> Being willing, as far as lay in my power, to comply with the incessant applications of my friends for a sight of the Indians; and finding it impossible either to have any rest or time to transact business, I appropriated two days a week to that purpose, viz. Tuesdays and Fridays. On those days, not only my house was filled, even to an inconvenience, but the street was so much crowded with carriages and people, that my residence was a great nuisance to the neighborhood.

Boswell was one of the visitors; see *Hyp.* 9.

[29] It is not to be forgotten that Gray in this poem shows the persisting taste for tombs, solitude, and meditation. The first draft of the *Elegy* has even more distinct traces of the school of resigned gloom than the version which we now have. The original manuscript of the poem, preserved in Eton College, contains four stanzas now omitted, in which these lines occur:

> No more with Reason and thyself at strife
> Give anxious Cares and endless Wishes room;
> But through the cool sequestered vale of Life
> Pursue the silent Tenour of thy Doom.

We have come to what might well have been the most wholesome aspect of eighteenth-century thought—the theory which was capable of preparing a welcome for the masculine sincerity of Burns. But for the most part, instead of laying accent on the positive qualities of these panaceas—the saving graces of energy and constant occupation in country life,[30] or the joy and hope to be found in children—the age made them the symbols of vanished opportunity, to be looked upon with melancholy regret. Children and peasants were magnified out of focus, not for what they were, but for what they were not, and happiness, *circa* 1750–60, became synonymous with ignorant or unsophisticated innocence—a state impossible, of course, to recapture. The cult which had begun as a cure for all the woes of mankind had but added fresh griefs to their original store: from a search for virtuous happiness which was unsuccessful because it had been undirected and vague, they had come to a definite ideal only to obscure it by the very melancholy which they were seeking to avoid, and thus they rendered it hopelessly remote. From this time on, the sentimental age solaced its griefs, not by assiduous search for means to either virtue or happiness, but by a relapse into mere appreciation of the fact that such states had once existed, and a mournful acquiescence in the certainty that they would never return. The last characteristic movement of the period, the development of a passion for the "good old days," is the outcome and the climax of this feeling.

The early history of the race supplied much the same qualities of ingenuous simplicity and virtue which the sentimental inquirers had found in the life of peasants, children, or savages, with the added charm of the heroic sublimity, awe-inspiring grimness, "pleasing terror" in which the age delighted. Gray helped to inaugurate this aspect of simplicity also, not only in his own poems, but through the great influence of his personal enthusiasm

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[30] Even in the rare cases where activity was stressed, it was not of a type likely to produce wholesome effects. The sense of caste, still powerful, had much to do with keeping natural simplicity an artificial thing. See Cowper's *The Task* (1786), in which he advises an interest in gardening, but

> . . . . no works indeed
> That ask robust tough sinews bred to toil,
> Servile employ,—but such as may amuse,
> Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.

and his researches in Celtic, Icelandic, and Runic monuments.[31] It remained, however, for a shrewder and bolder man to take the world by storm with a melancholy passion for the distant past. This was James Macpherson, who in his "translations" from Ossian, the supposed Gaelic bard (1762–63), perpetrated "as gross an imposition as ever the world was troubled with."[32] It is necessary to reflect, before accusing him of knavery, that he was but giving what his age was looking for. His chief contribution was the "charming sensibility" with which he refined the heroic grimness of primitive times. The critical dissertation which Dr. Hugh Blair wrote as a preface to the final collection of the poems shows how accurately Macpherson had gauged the taste of his audience;[33] it praises percisely the points which are most remote from the true character of ancient poetry, and in so doing unconsciously passes judgment upon the sentimental tendencies of the period itself:

Both [Homer and Ossian] are eminently sublime; but a difference may be remarked in the species of their sublimity. . . . . Homer is most sublime in actions and battles; Ossian in description and sentiment. In the pathetic, Homer, when he chooses to exert it, has great power; but Ossian exerts that power much oftener, and has the character of tenderness far more deeply imprinted on his works. No poet knew better how to seize and melt the heart. With regard to dignity of sentiment, the pre-eminence must clearly be given to Ossian. This is, indeed, a surprising circumstance, that in point of humanity, magnanimity, virtuous feelings of every kind, our rude Celtic bard should be distinguished to such a

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[31] From the publication of *The Bard* in 1757, Gray's interest centered upon the imitation or representation of ancient subjects. Although these poems were not at first clearly understood by the general public, Gray was not alone here any more than he was in the matter of simplicity otherwise. Many things had contributed to a movement of interest in non-classic antiquity—the love of romantic ruins, the renewed study of Spenser and Shakespeare, and (probably the most powerful of all) the publication of Mallet's *Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc* (1755), translated by Bishop Percy as *Northern Antiquities* in 1770. Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) gave further stimulus.

[32] Dr. Johnson's remark, in *Hebr.*, 274.

[33] His true translations of a few fragments had aroused the interest of Dr. Blair, professor of rhetoric at the University of Edinburgh, and it was the insistence of that enthusiastic gentleman which persuaded Macpherson to produce the spurious *Fingal, Carric-thura, Temora,* and the rest.

degree, that not only the heroes of Homer, but even those of the polite and refined Virgil, are left far behind by those of Ossian. . . . .

Upon the whole, if to feel ſtrongly, and to describe naturally, be the two chief ingredients in poetical genius, Ossian muſt, after fair examination, be held to possess that genius to a high degree. The queſtion is not, whether a few improprieties may be pointed out in his works? . . . . A thousand such cold and frivolous criticisms are altogether indecisive as to his genuine merit. But has he the spirit, the fire, the inspiration of a poet? Does he utter the voice of nature? Does he elevate by his sentiments? . . . . Does he paint to the heart as well as to the fancy? Does he make his readers glow, and tremble, and weep? These are the characteriſtics of true poetry. . . . . Uncouth and abrupt Ossian may sometimes appear, by reason of his conciseness, but he is sublime, he is pathetic, in an eminent degree. . . . . If he be thought too melancholy, yet he is always moral.

This was the temper of the audience which greeted with understanding the title of *The Hypochondriack*. Helplessly lost in a rapidly changing age, they were over-sensitive, self-pitying, full of sickly sentiment instead of sober critical judgment. In spite of the failure of all suggested panaceas, they preferred to seek new cures or lament the old, rather than to probe their wounds with the clean lancets of reason or broad humor or common sense, which saved many of their contemporaries.

2. BOSWELL AS HYPOCHONDRIACK

As the friend and companion of such an audience as this, Boswell was aware not only of its woes but of its peculiarities, and aware also that he shared them in large part. He was in no respect more the man of his age than he showed himself to be in the constant conflict between his sturdy common sense, which was dictated by experience and reason, and the languishing "sensibility" of the period, which he could not completely escape. In the main his common sense retained the upper hand.

This rational quality is apparent even in his discussions of the English Malady and the reports of his own symptoms. He gives graphic pictures of his languor, fretfulness, and despair; he goes so far as to make the absurd suggestions that hypochondriacs need flattery because they depreciate themselves, and that they may be helpless in their woe because evil spirits are a possible cause of it.[34]

[34] See *Hyp.* 14, 30, 48, 59, 63.

But there is in all this no hint of any *Virtue* or *philosophic sympathy* engendered by it; he never indulges in the popular confusion between thoughtfulness and melancholy—he even criticizes it as false.[35] From beginning to end Boswell emphasizes the unpleasant, sickly, selfish characteristics of the malady, and in general terms asserts the only cure to be that which Dr. Johnson had quoted to him from the *Anatomy of Melancholy:* "Be not solitary, be not idle."[36]

For the loose philosophies that his century produced, Boswell had very little use. True, he expresses a liberal conviction that there can be no such thing as a universal code of morals, and objects to rigid system in the education of children (with the comment that it usually fails); he constantly asserts the right of the individual to be his own best judge, especially in matters of moral discipline.[37] But these remarks do not indicate any sympathy for theories which tended to destroy Boswell's conventional fabric of society. From time to time he makes sharp criticisms of the philosophic faddists of his day, Deists and materialists alike, pronouncing their ideas to be the result of vanity or superficial learning, and observing that the very term philosophy has narrowed from its original sense of love of wisdom to a mere "plausible reasoning against established belief." For his own part, he finds "more satisfaction in acquiescing in experience than in attempting to loosen everything into uncomfortable doubt and fluctuation." He accepts the dictates of experience ("on which the keenest phiolosophical enquirer *must* act ninety-nine times in a hundred") because it is reasonable to do so; throughout the essays there is a strong accent upon the rational and comprehensible. It was through these simple and definite persuasions that Boswell came to the doctrine which ruled his emotions as well as his intellect—the acceptance of tempered authority in all things, political, religious, and social.[38] It accounts for his theoretical aver-

[35] *Hyp.* 26.

[36] The quotation occurs in a letter from Dr. Johnson to Boswell: *Life of J.*, 3. 471. Criticisms of the weakness of hypochondriacs are especially severe in *Hyp.* 6, 23, 30, 40.

[37] *Hyp.* 4, 40, 46, 48, 51.

[38] On philosophy, see *Hyp.* 5, 12, 50; on experience, *Hyp.* 6, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 24, 26, 40, etc.; on reverence for authority, *Hyp.* 15, 19, 45, 54, 55, 64.

sion to change, his distrust of metaphysics, his family pride, even (in part) his hero-worship of Paoli and Johnson.

It was the support of this conservative doctrine that kept Boswell from falling completely into the cure-all cults of the period, which swept away the judgment of so many of his contemporaries. Critics have found it easy to say that he took his wholesome opinions entirely from Dr. Johnson, but in regard to the sentimental panaceas of the century, at least, this is not the case.[39] Boswell is right in attributing this much of his common sense to his development by experience. During his years on the continent he had sat at the feet of Rousseau and associated closely with the radical, Wilkes; he loved and respected them both thereafter, in spite of the inevitable changes and chances which separated him from their intimate circles. He even saw fit, in his middle age, when he was writing the *Life of Johnson,* to take up the defense of Rousseau as a man whose "animated writings" had given him "great pleasure, and even edification."[40] Yet he had learned that we imagine grievances simply for the sake of "glowing with the animation to resistance," and the decisions which this penetrating observation assisted him to make did not spare his two iconoclastic friends.[41] The charm of their vigor he could not resist; their rebellious ideas he put firmly aside.

The most striking instance of this mature judgment is found in Boswell's treatment of sweet savage simplicity, the favorite ideal of Rousseau and the Deists. In his early years, when he had just come from the influence of Jean-Jacques, Boswell sighed with the rest for obscure retreats and the pure life of the uncivilized; he confided to Johnson in 1769 that sometimes he had "been in the humour of wishing to retire to a desart," and two years

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[39] As a matter of fact, Dr. Johnson was not free from the sentimental tastes of the day; cf. his delight in the conscious virtue of Richardson's novels (*Life of J.*, 2. 201 and note), the "sensibility" he evinced upon reading a gloomy passage in Beattie's *Hermit* (*ibid.*, 4. 215), and his idealization of the schoolboy's happiness (discussed in later pages of this section).

[40] *Ibid.*, 2. 14. See also the interesting article by Dr. Pottle in Philol. Quart., 4. 4: *The Part Played by Horace Walpole and James Boswell in the Quarrel between Rousseau and Hume* (1925).

[41] *Hyp.* 19, on subordination, makes adverse comments on the "friends of liberty." See also *Hyp.* 47, 49, and notes.

previous to that he had told Temple that he was "tempted to join Rousseau in preferring the savage state . . . . when jaded with business or when tormented with the passions of civilized life," hoping to "brave the elements by glorious insensibility."[42] Even at that time he had added sensibly, "these are the sallies of desperation." It is notable, however, that although he perceived thus early the uselessness of such ideals, he continued for some time to believe the savage existence free from the "passions of civilized life."[43] He does not admit these opinions in *The Hypochondriack's* pages. Instead he cites the works of Lafitau and Robertson on the American Indian, reports his own reactions to the Eskimos whom he visited at Captain Cartwright's house, quotes an interview with Captain Cook on the temper and habits of the Tahitians[44]—and the resulting comments in his essays are those of a man of settled sense, not of a sentimental dreamer. The savages, glorious men of nature, are not only invariably cruel and inordinately fond of food and strong drink, but so ignorant that they would scarcely be superior to a nation of children; in fact, in the essay on youth and age (*Hyp.* 9), Boswell adopts the rôle of experimental philosopher, and decides from his observations that there is no difference between the infants and the adults of a savage race. He discredits the idea that the savage lives and dies untroubled by the fear of death—so much for glorious insensibility!—and he sums up his general opinions in the short assertion that he prefers civilized life with all its qualms to the savage state of brutality.[45]

But it is not only the savages who suffer thus in the cold light of reason; Boswell seizes upon their civilized patrons and raps them smartly. He has no belief in "pretty theories . . . . of the beauty of virtue—of the natural moral sense—of the sympathetic feeling of morality," or even of natural pity.[46] He finds two

[42] *Life of J.*, 2. 86, and *Letters of B.*, 1. 98.

[43] See *Life of J.*, 2. 83; 3. 57; 4. 356. Some of these are references obscured in characteristic fashion by the quotation of his own words as those of "a gentleman who was present," but the gentleman is pretty certainly Boswell.

[44] See *Hyp.* 20, 32, 9 for these items.

[45] For these references to the savage and the life of simplicity, see *Hyp.* 9, 10, 14, 17, 20, 29, 32, 40, 46.

[46] *Hyp.* 7, 29.

causes for the delusions of the sentimentalists; the first is their shallow inconstancy to the Christian religion,[47] and the second their hypocrisy, which Boswell displays unhesitatingly in references to Rousseau and Lord Monboddo, the Scottish judge whose insistence that men had once worn tails had got for him the sobriquet of the *judge a posteriori:*

> I must confess that my opinion is somewhat influenced by the consideration that if the savage life be truly so much preferable to the civilized life, it is a felicity which may very easily be obtained. Neither money nor interest are requisite. A man may betake himself to the woods and wilds whenever he pleases. . . . . Yet neither of these philosophers nor any of their disciples, so far as I have heard, have embraced the happiness in their reach.[48]

Boswell was no more sympathetic toward the other cults of picturesque simplicity than he was to the noble savage. He tried to develop a passion for nature because he felt it would help him to find peace in the enforced residence at Auchinleck, but after an effort or two he was obliged to desist; his whole feeling was against country life, and for the same reason that the sentimentalists acclaimed it. In his opinion the only pastoral enthusiasts are those "who are satiated and jaded, and sigh for repose, [delighting] their fancies with rural felicity." He himself never had enough of city life, and considered the bucolic paradise to be completely weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable.[49]

He was evidently fond of children, but without the boundless exaggeration of his contemporaries. He discusses their relations with their parents, considers the proper means of educating them, shows how they serve as a happy bond between the father and mother, and like Johnson, staunchly defends the rights of youth in opposition to the surly prejudice of old age.[50] But for all that, he had no envy of the simple innocent childish state, such as even the rational Dr. Johnson felt.[51] Boswell considers man in his early years to be "an imperfect animal—He is green—He is not sub-

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[47] *Hyp.* 7. [48] *Hyp.* 20. [49] *Hyp.* 36, 37.

[50] *Hyp.* 45, 46, 38, 43, 9, respectively.

[51] *Life of J.*, I. 522:

> He maintained that a boy at school was the happiest of human beings. I support a different opinion, from which I have never yet varied, that a man is happier; and I enlarged upon the anxiety and sufferings which are to be endured at school.

stantiated."[52] Children and savages he usually groups together as examples of ignorance or unenviable artlessness, and the wish to return to childhood seems to strike him as something almost indecent, as if it were a confession that the only happiness is that of the senses.[53]

His attitude toward primitive antiquity implies that he conceived his forefathers to be a combination of the child's ingenuousness and the grossness of the savage. He devotes an entire essay to a contrast between past and present (*Hyp.* 52), emphasizing the fact that our ancestors had no virtues which we have not, and without doubt had much freer play for their vices. In his approval of the contemporary age he becomes sincerely eloquent; the criticism of disloyalty in church and state is brushed aside with informal statistics, the cry that learning had decayed is answered with a fine paragraph on the increase of general knowledge and the improvement of means whereby life can be filled with innocent pleasures—"so that we may have more happiness in one day in London than [our forefathers] could have in a large portion of their lives." His "peculiar fondness" is reserved for that quality in contemporary life which he prefers to all else—"the advantage of this age over ancient times in civility of manners." This was a strikingly independent statement, in a day which was beginning to exalt the code of the Middle Ages again; but Boswell had gone even further in his twelfth essay, where he refers to chivalry as "the strange system of manners, ... the offspring of wild Gothick imagination, ... of which the amazing prevalence must ever be held as one of the most astonishing facts in the history of human nature." In the paper on past and present, he mentions the popular reason for the love of ancient days—the simplicity and sensibility which were supposed to fill mediaeval lives; but he dismisses it with the characteristic remark, "It is narrow thinking to maintain that it is more desirable to have few wants." The actual reasons for the universal approval of times more ancient than our own, he assigns to the mysterious power of distance, the "acrimonious pride" that makes men unwilling to admit excellence in their contemporaries, and "that rigid false

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[52] *Hyp.* 42. This idea is developed further in *Hyp.* 46.

[53] See *Hyp.* 9, 23, 59.

virtue which affects to despise and abhor human nature in general"; not far behind these is the influence on young minds of balladry, "in which violence is displayed with all the interesting appearances of heroism," and the officious zeal of the antiquarian virtuoso.

This essay contrasting past and present does not stand alone in its praise of Boswell's own day. Throughout the series, Boswell shows the same ready satisfaction with the world as he found it—"that rational, temperate, orderly, and well cultivated state of existence which a great proportion of mankind enjoy"[54]—and defends the various phases of it with vigorous relish. He suggests that satires on luxury spring from moroseness or envy; he will not join in the cant phrases about unhappiness being the assured companion of the rich man; he does not consider trade a blight upon the nation's soul—rather he is able to see that trade and luxury brought to England qualities of spirit which she needed. All his ideas of happiness are matters of the spirit, all his best pleasure is to be found in the social graces, which glow brightest in the city, when some artist in hospitality (himself or another) has collected a harmony of wits.[55] In the city too could be savored best Boswell's first requirement for happiness—the sharp consciousness of pleasure or activity, the act of thinking, which (theoretically at least) was his greatest joy.[56] This is a great part of his reasoning against simplicity and country life: the child, the savage, the countryman had nothing to excite their faculties; moreover, they were all unconscious of the bliss attributed to them by the sentimentalists, and therefore, to all intents and purposes, they had it not.

In spite of the clear, intelligent good sense of so much of Boswell's thinking, however, there are equally distinct traces of the sentimental here and there in *The Hypochondriack.* It is chiefly evident in his preoccupation with self, and his desire to project that self beyond the limits of time and space by means of print.[57] I have pointed out in another section of this study how much the essays are a medium for Boswell's homilies to Boswell;

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[54] *Hyp.* 20. [55] *Hyp.* 8, 17, 57, 58.

[56] See section I. 2 of this Introduction, pp. 12 ff.

[57] *Hyp.* 67, 70.

moreover, although his confidences to his readers are not so ill-advised as they are elsewhere, they are so frequent that the author himself is moved several times to comment on his "frankness of communication."[58] There is, even in his theory of spontaneous composition, a suggestion of affected personal whim, when he asserts that he writes to "please himself—[to] indulge his own inclination." He justifies his absorption in his own personality by a comparison of himself to Montaigne, but there are wide seas between the attitude of Boswell and that of the genial Eyquem. Montaigne refers to his own experiences constantly, it is true, but he treats them in the spirit of the Renaissance, regarding himself objectively, as a sort of phenomenon whose workings are perhaps mildly worthy of note. Boswell never does so. He makes an effort to see himself at least as a factor in the social structure, after the manner of Chesterfield, but it is a conscious moral effort; his instinctive attitude to himself is intensely subjective, in the fashion of the romantic school. His nature is to him an inexplicable and somewhat dark and untrustworthy region, to be explored and weighed introspectively; he is a little triumphant about it in one case, a little puzzled in another, a little awed or surprised in a third—but always involved in the mysteries of "I," and always feeling the need of self-expression.

Otherwise his sentimental propensities are revealed in a certain artificiality of attitude—a sort of intellectual posturing about his subject which at times amounts to a self-deception as complete as that of the sentimentalists themselves. A word which acts as a warning signal of this defect is *benevolence;* Boswell can rarely use it without a complacent air of having conveyed to his reader something at once genteel and lofty, and yet he employs it so vaguely that it cannot carry conviction of any definite idea. It is synonymous with politeness in essay 23, with condescending patronage in numbers 34, 36, and 37; he can speak of the benevolence of flattery in number 59 and the "benevolent pleasure of pleasing" in number 61; in number 24 he looks forward to an increase in the "general stock of benevolence" by the dangerous means of mutual indulgence—an excellent example of the loose expressions of the sentimentalists.

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[58] *Hyp.* 12, 41, 70.

His ideas on sympathy and faith, too, are likely to be couched in phrasing which suggests an emotionally hazy state of mind. His discussion of the cosmopolitan spirit offers a reminiscence of the expansive reveries of Rousseau, in the suggestion that man's love may extend to the whole human race;[59] his notions of what constitutes true enlargement of the mind in religious meditation are almost the same as those of Mme de Staël—"the mind which believes much is more enlarged than the mind which believes little, especially when the mind which believes much takes in magnificent and permanent views, bounded neither by time nor space."[60] The most extraordinary instances of his superficial qualities, however, are found in those passages where he endeavors to demonstrate his religious ideas by means of analogies. He is following his usual method of making clear the abstract by means of the concrete, but his wish to use only the highest earthly comparisons betrays him into dependence upon the elegant cant of the day. He conjectures that the angels may not be free from fear, but that it is probably no more than the "gentle solicitude of happy lovers"; he devotes a whole essay to arguments in favor of religious faith, brought out by an extended comparison between our feeling for religion and our sense of aesthetic values, and concluding with the adjuration to cultivate a "religious taste."[61]

In other cases, Boswell struggles to reconcile the sentimental and the rational, and the result is a series of ill-jointed compromises. Throughout the series he discovers an occasional tendency to confuse his God with natural laws under the name of Providence,[62] and in spite of his belief that this world is a mysterious scene of suffering designed for our ultimate good, he asserts that "it is surely more agreeable to good notions of Providence, that the world should be in a progressive state of improvement."[63] He is capable, after scouting the theories of the school of natural simplicity, of appealing to "the natural state" as revealed in savages and children, for arguments to prove his contention that man is properly the superior of woman, or that a taste for drink

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[59] *Hyp.* 41.

[60] *Hyp.* 54. For Mme de Staël's remarks see *Germany*, 3. 10, and 4. 1.

[61] *Hyp.* 2, 55.

[62] *Hyp.* 14, 18, 26, 48.

[63] *Hyp.* 3, 15, 39, 52, and *passim.*

is born with us.[64] Nowhere is his dexterity in merging fine sentiment with his worldly wishes more clearly demonstrated than in his philosophy of hospitality:

> Genuine, kindly hospitality . . . . ought by all means to be promoted, that good will may be diffused amongst different ranks, and the elegancies of the metropolis may in some degree be known by those who live at a distance from it, while at the same time, the fragments of feasting gladden the hearts of the poor.[65]

Aside from these definite evidences of Boswell's ability to address his sentimental audience in their own tongue, there is apparent from time to time the survival of his youthful exaggeration and credulity, shown in such things as his distinction between love and marriage, his romantic persuasion that a hypochondriac can love no otherwise than violently, his secret fear of ridicule, his avowal of superstition and stout belief in the existence of evil spirits, his morbid horror of death, and his restless search for new impressions. All of these show how much, in spite of his sane philosophy, Boswell was a man of his age, eminently fitted to address his readers as *The Hypochondriack*.[66]

This conflict waging in his mind—or perhaps we should say, in the manner of the sentimentalists themselves, between his mind and heart—is typical of the late eighteenth century, that period of transition between the neo-classic standards and the romantic lack of them. On the one side, he was sane, reasonable, even shrewd, in the ability to judge men and to make keen intellectual distinctions; on the other, supersensitive, vague, full of exaggerations, and prone to deal in hollow phrases. The constant wavering between the two is but the restlessness of an age without fixed habits of thought. The old code had not yet disappeared, and the new had not taken definite shape, but it was slowly creeping in, coloring the older ideas, sometimes distorting them—too vague to combat in all its forms, and too insidiously powerful to resist completely. It is most unfortunate that Boswell lost the diaries covering the years of his acquaintance with Rousseau; it would have been illuminating to read the record of their conversations.

[64] *Hyp.* 12, 24, 30, 36.

[65] *Hyp.* 58.

[66] See Index; these ideas occur too generally for notation here.

Both sentimentally melancholy, both seeking the abstract virtue of their day, and deriving their idea of it from English literature, these two seemed to be separated only by race and age. Instead, they were the two extremes of a great movement. Rousseau was already at the end of it—the restless melancholy gathered into a fierce hot hatred of convention, the introspection become an unchecked egotism, and the sentimental pretty dreams of Thomson, DeFoe, and Gray twisted into a torch which was to fire the world in the French Revolution. Boswell was still within the limits of the eighteenth century proper—shifting, uncertain, vaguely helpless, but struggling still for self-control and sanity.

THE HYPOCHONDRIACK.

"Imparfait comme je suis, je me trouve un excellent homme dans le monde comme il exiſte. Mais j'ai une idée qu'il m'eſt possible d'être au dessus du monde comme il eſt; et avant que je suis comme cela, je ne serais content."—Boswell to Rousseau.

THE
LONDON MAGAZINE,
FOR OCTOBER, 1777.

For the LONDON MAGAZINE.

THE HYPOCHONDRIACK.

NUMBER I. *(To be continued monthly.)*[1]

Sunt verba & voces quibus hunc lenire dolorem
Possis, & magnam morbi deponere partem.—HORAT.

Words will avail the wretched mind to ease,
And much abate the dismal black disease.

Nov. 1, 1777.

A PERIODICAL paper of instruction and entertainment may be reckoned one of the happiest inventions of modern times, whether we consider the advantage of writers, or of readers. To writers, it affords a ready opportunity of indulging their genius, without exhausting it. To undertake the writing of a large book is like entering on a long and difficult journey, in the course of which much fatigue and uneasiness must be undergone, while at the same time one is uncertain of reaching the end of it: whereas writing a short essay is like taking a pleasant airing that enlivens and invigorates by the exercise which it yields, while the design is gratified in its completion. Men of the greatest parts and application are at times averse to labour for any continuance; and could they not employ their pens on lighter pieces, would at those times remain in a total inactivity. Writing such essays therefore may fill up the interstices of their lives, and occupy moments which would otherwise be lost. To other men, who have not yet attained to any considerable degree of constancy in application, the writing of periodical essays may serve to strengthen their faculties and prepare them for the execution of

[1] This formal heading Boswell deserts bit by bit. The date of writing is omitted after the first number, probably because its presence betrayed the fact that the periodical was published late, as in this instance—Boswell's essay headed Nov. 1, 1777, appearing in the October issue. "For the London Magazine" is continued through three issues and then dropped.

The quotation from Horace is found in *Epist.*, 1 . 1 . 34.

more important works: and what a great proportion of ingenious men never have leisure or resolution to write any thing but a short essay, being like the artist in Horace, who could hit off a nail extremely well, but whose abilities extended not to operations of any magnitude.[2]

To readers, a periodical paper affords all the advantage of productions, which, but for the invention of this species of composition, never would have existed. They have short effusions of exalted souls, which like sparks of diamonds are highly precious; and they have a variety of literary pieces by writers, whose abilities are perhaps not extensive and robust, but who have not the less quickness and grace. Variety is wonderfully pleasing, and we find more of it in small subjects than in great. There is a greater diversity and more beauty among flowers than among trees, in a bed of tulips than in a grove of oaks, and in the works of art of every kind, smaller pieces are more exquisitely finished than greater. To a small piece of metal we give the finest polish; a small piece of ground is brought into the highest degree of cultivation. Upon this subject I would quote Sir Francis Osborn, whose works contain many shrewd observations in language abounding with lively metaphor, though with incorrectness.[3] Upon this subject he says, "huge volumes, like the ox roasted whole at Bartholomew Fair, may proclaim plenty of labour and invention, but afford less of what is delicate, savoury, and well concocted than smaller pieces." Indeed, what has been said of

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[2] *Ars Poet.*, 32.

[3] Francis Osborne (1593–1659), a miscellaneous writer and minor official, was one of Boswell's favorite authors, about whom he and Johnson disagreed; see *Life of J.*, 2. 222:

> I expressed a liking for Mr. Francis Osborne's works, and asked him what he thought of that writer. He answered, "A conceited fellow. Were a man to write so now, the boys would throw stones at him." He, however, did not alter my opinion of a favorite authour, to whom I was first directed by his being quoted in *The Spectator*, and in whom I have found much shrewd and lively sense, expressed indeed in a style somewhat quaint, which, however, I do not dislike. His book has an air of originality. We figure to ourselves an ancient gentleman talking to us.

Boswell mistakenly calls him *Sir Francis* throughout *The Hypochondriack*; it is noteworthy that he changes to the authentic *Mr. Osborne* in the *Life of J.* Osborne is best known for the work which Boswell quotes in *Hyp.* 22—*Advice to a Son* (1656). I am unable to verify the passage in this first essay, but it is probably taken from the same work. Osborne is quoted also in *The Spectator*, 150.

writers will, by reference to the difference between more and less active employment of mind, apply in every respect to readers. Many of the most studious can at times run over only a few pages; and it is better if they can have in that space something entire and unbroken. Readers too, who were once so idle, dissipated or listless, as hardly to be able to read at all, have by means of a periodical paper been gradually led on, till they acquired a habit of study, like one of a weakly stomach, who is made to eat often and little at a time, till his organs strengthen and he is able to take a full meal: and what a great proportion of readers can never fix their attention on any thing more than short essays?[4]

This invention therefore is I hope proved to be for the mutual benefit of writers and readers: and I cannot help thinking that readers are but too little considered by writers. When we talk of the republic of letters, we are apt to mean only writers, whereas writers should remember that they would make but a sorry figure were it not for readers; for to them they are indebted both for profit and fame. How few of the readers of books are writers! and I fairly own I do not believe that writers are either the most candid, or the best entertained readers. For, not to mention the prejudice arising from competition, and the envy of rivals, they

[4] Cf. Johnson's account of *The Spectator*, in his *Life of Addison:*

> That Addison always wrote as he would think it necessary to write now, cannot be affirmed; his instructions were such as the characters of his readers made proper. That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk, was in his time rarely to be found. . . . . His purpose was to infuse literary curiosity by gentle and unsuspected conveyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy: he therefore presented knowledge in the most alluring form, not lofty and austere, but accessible and familiar. . . . . His attempt succeeded: enquiry was awakened, and comprehension expanded. An emulation of intellectual elegance was excited, and from this time to our own, life has been gradually exalted, and conversation purified and enlarged.

A totally opposite point of view is that of Dr. John Brown of Carlisle, in his *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757):

> But what kind of Reading must *that* be, which can attract or entertain the languid Morning-Spirit of modern Effeminacy? Any, indeed, that can but prevent the unsupportable Toil of *Thinking*, that may serve as a preparatory *Whet* of *Indolence*, to the approaching Pleasures of the Day. Thus it comes to pass, that weekly Essays, amatory Plays and Novels, political Pamphlets, and Books that revile Religion; together with a general *Hash* of these, served up in some *monthly Mess* of *Dulness*, are the meagre *literary Diet* of Town and Country.

In short, had Bolingbroke's five huge quartos been published "under the inviting shape of *Essays philosophical and moral*," they might have come "within the compass of a Breakfast-reading, or amused the Man of Fashion while under the Discipline of the *curling Tongs*."

are too much in the secret; they are like players, who know all that is behind the curtain, and who cannot therefore have such fine feelings, so agreeable a delusion of fancy in the theatre, as other spectators. Writers are apt to think the republick of letters composed only of themselves, as some courtiers when they talk of the nation, or some clergymen when they talk of the church.

A periodical paper of instruction and entertainment is truly of British origin. It first appeared in London; and from the great lustre with which it was produced to the world by the constellation of wits in Queen Anne's reign, it would at any rate have for a time had eminence and imitators: as we imitate the form into which any thing is thrown by distinguished men, their manners, their dress, their equipages, even the smallest circumstances about them. But from the long esteem and publick favour with which a periodical paper has been attended, and the several successful works of that kind; nay, the many unsuccessful attempts of which there might be a large catalogue given, we must be convinced that this mode of writing has intrinsic excellence, and that mankind are fully sensible of its value.

Neither has the publick fondness for a periodical paper been confined to this country. Not only have the most celebrated English periodical papers been translated into foreign languages, but several nations on the continent have produced original works of that species. Still however this island may boast with justice, what all original inventors, whether justly or not, would have us believe, that it maintains a superiority of excellence. Indeed our free constitution gives occasion to an inexhaustible fund of subjects for such essays, the most interesting of which are on life and manners.

I flatter myself that *The Hypochondriack* may be agreeably received as a periodical essayist in England, where the malady known by the denomination of melancholy, hypochondria, spleen, or vapours, has been long supposed almost universal.[5] *Shakespeare* shews in a very lively manner the prevalency of this opinion, when he introduces Hamlet talking with the grave-diggers.

Clown. It was the very day that young *Hamlet* was born, he that was mad and sent into England.

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[5] See Introduction, III. 1.

Ham. Aye, marry, why was he sent into England?

Clown. Why because he was mad, he shall recover his wits there; or if he do not, it is no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

Clown. 'Twill not be seen in him, there the men are as mad as he.[6]

That this opinion ſtill continues, we may be convinced by looking into the late writings of foreigners. In *Madam Pompadour's* letters, Britain is called *the gloomy isle*,[7] and *Groslet* a late traveller represents our people as under the perpetual influence of melancholy.[8] He has no doubt exaggerated considerably; but his observations at leaſt prove that the Hypochondria is ſtill one of our ſtriking characteriſticks. Happy would it be, if there were not ſo many whoſe ſad experience muſt bear witness that ſuch is the case in reality, no less than in appearance.

Hypochondria however is not peculiar to Britain. We may trace it in all countries in one shape or other. Even a French poet though living in a country blessed with the pureſt air, and whoſe inhabitants cultivate perpetual gayety, confesses a diseased mind to be universal.

> *Tous les hommes sont foux & malgré tous leur soins,*
> *Ne different entre eux que du plus & du moins.*—BOILEAU.
>
> All men are mad: disguise it as they please,
> You'll find they differ only in degrees.[9]

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[6] *Hamlet*, 5 . 1 . 164. Boswell makes another jesting allusion to this scene in one of his letters to Erskine (*Correspondence* [*with*] *Andrew Erskine*, 63):

> I hope . . . . you will not impute my living in England to the same cause for which Hamlet was advised to go there, because the people were all as mad as himself.

[7] Boswell refers to the spurious *Lettres de Mme la Marquise de Pompadour depuis 1753 jusqu'à 1762 inclusivement*, published in London in both French and English, in 1771. The only authentic letters of the Pompadour are those edited by Malassis in 1878. The fictitious correspondence has been attributed to the Marquis de Barbé-Marbois.

[8] Probably Pierre-Jean Grosley (1718–1785), lawyer and traveler, who visited Italy, Holland, and England at various times. Among many works both learned and light, he published *Londres* (1770).

[9] *Satires*, 4. Boswell quotes wrongly, following (whether by coincidence or not) the rendering of these two lines in *The Spectator*, 548, rather than the original "*Ne diffèrent entre eux que du plus ou du moins.*" In this, as in other quotations from the French, Boswell has been careless of accents, and has left the error uncorrected.

It is not my intention in this introductory paper to enter upon a description or analysis of the unhappy disorder of which I shall treat in the course of my speculations. It is sufficient to observe, that all the medicines of a physical nature which have been employed have proved insufficient to overcome it. Neither the so much famed *hypo-drops;* nor the *tincture of spleenwort* have been effectual. Let us then try remedies of another kind:

> *Sunt verba & voces quibus hunc lenire dolorem*
> *Possis, & magnam morbi deponere partem.*—HORAT.
> Words will avail the wretched mind to ease,
> And much abate the dismal black disease.

From my title of *Hypochondriack* I would not have it thought that I am at present actually labouring under that malady, but as it is a saying in feudal treatises, *semel Baro semper Baro,* "Once a baron always a baron;"[10] or as one who has had a commission in the army is ever after called captain; so I call myself the Hypochondriack from former sufferings. I am so well acquainted with the distemper of Hypochondria, that I think myself qualified to assist some of my unhappy companions, who are now groaning under it. I cannot say that I ever fancied myself made of glass; or that my stomach was a stall with a cobler at work in it, or had my brain impressed with any such wild and extravagant imaginations.[11] But I have suffered much of the fretfulness, the gloom, and the despair that can torment a thinking being; and the time

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[10] Cf. *Life of J.*, 1. 569—"Un gentilhomme est toujours gentilhomme."

[11] Delusions about living creatures in the brain or intestines, or about actual changes in the substance of the body, were common among sufferers from hypochondriasis. Cf. Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, 89:

. . . . those who reside constantly in town, owe this disorder mostly to the influence of the weather. It is impossible to describe what a variety of transmutations an east wind will produce; it has been known to change a lady of fashion into a parlor couch, an alderman into a plate of custards, and a dispenser of justice into a rat-trap. Even philosophers themselves are not exempt from its influence; it has often converted a Poet into a coral and bells, and a patriot senator into a dumb waiter.

See also *The Spectator*, 536, and *Life of J.*, 1. 76—a comment by Boswell:

It is a common effect of low spirits or melancholy, to make those who are afflicted with it imagine that they are actually suffering those evils which happen to be most strongly presented to their minds. Some have fancied themselves to be deprived of the use of their limbs, some to labour under acute diseases, others to be in extreme poverty; when, in truth, there was not the least reality in any of the suppositions; so that when the vapours were dispelled, they were convinced of the delusion.

has been that I could no more have believed it possible for me to write even such a paper as this, than I can now believe it possible for me to write a *Spectator* or a *Rambler*.

As I have now attained to tranquillity and cheerfulness in the general tenor of my existence, I may encourage the efforts of those who have not yet escaped from the dreary mist; as the shouting of such as have reached the shore after a shipwreck gives double vigour to those who are still struggling with the waves.[12] I shall sometimes apply myself immediately to the distemper; but my general purpose will be to divert Hypochondriacks of every degree, from dwelling on their uneasiness, by presenting to them such essays on various subjects as I can furnish from my own intellectual store. I desire not to have the assistance of correspondents however much I may want it, because I think this paper will be more beneficial to those readers for whom it is chiefly intended, when they are sure that every original sentence is written, and every quotation selected by the *Hypochondriack* himself.

I make my first appearance in the month of November; as the *Spectator* remarks, that a French author begins a novel, "in the gloomy month of November, when the people of England begin to hang and drown themselves."[13] I dare say there are many

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[12] This first paper was written in a year when Boswell seems to have been unusually well and contented. His letters of this period are filled with references to business and to his pleasant contacts with books and intelligent men; he had had a jaunt to England which satisfied him for the time. Even his *Boswelliana* bears testimony to his ability to "go quietly on," under the date *February 1777* (p. 283). For the greater part of his life matters were otherwise. In his early youth he told various correspondents that melancholy was "the great principle in [his] composition," that it was "always weighing [him] down and rendering [him] indifferent to all pursuits," and that he was "always apprehensive of it" (*Letters of B.*, 1. 12, 14, 76, 100). For a few years after his marriage in 1769 it apparently left him, and although he suffered from attacks of the spleen during the tour to the Hebrides in 1773, he did not think it worth his while to mention the disease as part of his self-sketch in his journal of the expedition (*Hebr.*, 58). By 1775 he began complaining of gloom in his letters once more, and his distress increased with the years (*Letters of B.*, 1. 221, 236, 239, 253 n. 3; 2. 283, 309, 344, 349, 359, 397, 422, 438, 440, 442). For Boswell's attempts to remedy this defect, see *Hyp.* 39, 63, 64, and Introduction, I . 2.

[13] *The Spectator*, 387. Boswell is writing absently here, inserting an unconscious repetition of his own clause predicate in the quotation; the original

Hypochondriacks who will be saying at this season, with *Thomson* in his *Winter*,

> ———"Welcome kindred glooms!
> "Congenial horrors hail!

and who upon hearing that a professed Hypochondriack is coming out, will wish to join company with me, merely from a prospect of dismal sociality. I hope however, they will find themselves agreeably disappointed, and while they have that satisfaction which is always found in the society of those who have felt the same distresses which we endure, I may, without ever offending them by an excess of gayety, insensibly communicate to them that good-humour, which if it does not make life rise to felicity, at least preserves it from wretchedness. I acknowledge I cannot help feeling a satisfaction compounded between vanity and benevolence, while I please myself with the hope of contributing to the relief of many as unhappy as I have formerly been.

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passage is, ". . . . *November, when the people of England hang and drown themselves.*"

Compare to this Voltaire's amusing account of the effects of east wind on the English, in his *Mélanges* ("*À M* ..., 1727"); *Œuvres*, ed. 1879, 22. 17:

Je trouvai le lendemain, dans un café malpropre, mal meublé, mal servi, et mal éclairé, la plupart de ces messieurs, qui la veille étaient si affables et d'une humeur si aimable; aucun d'eux ne me reconnut. ... Ne me sentant coupable de rien, je pris la liberté de demander à l'un d'eux, avec un air de vivacité qui leur parut fort étrange, pourquoi ils étaient tous si tristes: mon homme me répondit d'un air refrogné qu'il faisait un vent d'est. Dans le moment arriva un de leurs amis qui leur dit avec un visage indifférent: 'Molly s'est coupé la gorge ce matin; son amant l'a trouvée morte dans sa chambre, avec un rasoir sanglant à coté d'elle.' ... Ces messieurs, qui tous étaient amis de Molly, reçurent la nouvelle sans sourciller. L'un d'eux seulement demanda ce qu'était devenu l'amant: *Il a acheté le rasoir*, dit froidement quelqu'un de la compagnie. ... Je ne pouvais pas comprendre d'abord ce que le vent d'est avait de commun avec l'humeur sombre de ces messieurs et la mort de Molly. Je sortis brusquement du café et j'allai à la cour, plein de ce beau préjugé français qu'une cour est toujours gaie. Tout y était triste et morne, jusqu'aux filles d'honneur. On y parlait mélancoliquement du vent d'est. ... Le climat opérait déjà sur moi, et je m'étonnais de ne pouvoir rire. Un fameux médecin de la cour, à qui je confiai mon surprise, me dit ... que je verrais bien autre chose aux mois de novembre et de mars; qu'alors on se pendait par douzaine; que presque tout le monde était reélement malade dans ces deux saisons et qu'une mélancholie noire se répandait sur toute la nation: "Car c'est alors, dit-il, que le vent d'est souffle le plus constamment. ... Les animaux même en souffrent, et ont tous l'air abattu. ..."

No. II. Nov. 1777

[ON FEAR]

Terror in his ipso major solet esse periculo.—Ovid.[1]
Fear is oft greater than the danger found.

OF ALL the sufferings to which the mind of man is liable in this state of darkness and imperfection, the passion of fear is the severest, excepting the remorse of a guilty conscience, which however has much of fear in it, being not solely a tormenting anguish of reflection on the past, but a direful foreboding of the future; or as the sacred scriptures strongly express it, "a certain fearful looking for of judgement."[2]

The boasted fearlessness of some men will, upon a close examination, be found to be either affectation or insensibility; for, without question, all who think and feel must find objects enough to excite fear, in a greater or lesser degree, fear of one kind or of another.[3] It is recorded as an eulogium pronounced over the grave of John Knox, the rugged reformer of Scotland, by one of higher rank, but not of much more refined manners than himself, that "he never feared the face of man."[4] This was probably very true, yet Knox, though of a spirit not to be awed by the countenance of mortals, even by his fair sovereign and her court, must not be supposed to have been without fear of any sort; as we all know that those who are proof against one species of fear are affected by a different species. John duke of Argyle and Greenwich, one

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[1] *Heroides*, 16. 351.

[2] *Heb.*, 10. 27.

[3] Cf. *Life of J.*, 2. 93:

The General said, that "a great part of the fashionable infidelity was owing to a desire of shewing courage!" . . . . Johnson. "That is a mighty foolish affectation. Fear is one of the passions of human nature, of which it is impossible to divest it. You remember that the Emperour Charles V, when he read upon the tomb-stone of a Spanish nobleman, 'Here lies one who never knew fear,' wittily said, 'Then he never snuffed a candle with his fingers.'"

See also *ibid.*, 2. 122; 3. 175; Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, quoted below; and the essays on death, *Hyp.* 14–16.

[4] The remark was made by the Earl of Morton, regent of Scotland at the time of Knox's death, 1572. Another variant of the saying is "neither flattered nor feared any flesh."

of the most gallant noblemen that ever graced the British army,[5] is said to have been timorous on horseback upon ordinary occasions. The apprehension of evil is awakened in some by one form, and in others by another; as pleasure is produced in different minds by different causes, each of which would have no effect upon some one mind. That there may be a state of mind so dull as to be insensible of fear, as there may be an utter deafness which no sound can pervade, is I believe possible, and I am inclined to think that there have been examples of it.[6] It is also possible that the mind may be in such a state of tumult and disorder from the agitation of violent passions, that fear cannot affect it,[7] as there may be such a previous degree of noise in a certain portion of space as will exclude any additional sound; an humorous representation of which we have in *Hogarth's* enraged Musician.[8] But these extraordinary situations do not infringe upon the general theory of the human mind as subject to the distressing passion of fear; nor is a system founded upon general experience to be shaken by the appearances of want of fear which people have assumed. Nothing is more usual than to affect appearances, the very reverse of those of the real feelings, in order that the real feelings may be concealed. The unknown author of a fine copy

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[5] The second Duke of Argyle, Baron Chatham and Duke of Greenwich (1678–1743). He served in the Low Countries with Marlborough, and after Malplaquet became an actual rival of his General in popularity and influence; his military feats were daring, but firmly carried through. He was partly responsible for the downfall of the Stuart cause, through his shrewd loyalty to the Whigs at the death of Anne, and was entrusted with command of the King's forces in Scotland during the rebellion.

[6] Between this essay and the next, Boswell searches out an instance in point, and since he cannot bear to waste it, tucks it into his remarks upon the irrationality of arms-makers; see *Hyp.* 3.

[7] Cf. *Hyp.* 15, and the parallels to Montaigne's essay *Of Diversion* there given; also *Hyp.* 14, 16.

[8] Hogarth's *Enraged Musician* (1740) was originally intended to be one of a set, the first having been *The Distressed Poet.* The figure of the musician was probably that of Michael Festin, an acquaintance of the artist, who related the episode which Hogarth made famous. The print was evidently a favorite; Fielding says of it in his *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* that it was "enough to make a man deaf to look at" it, and George Colman wrote a skit for the Haymarket Theatre based upon it.

of verses to *Clarissa,* in *Dodsley's* collection, makes a tormented lover

"In clam'rous mirth each pang disguise,
"And laughter swell with burſting sighs."[9]

And *Dryden's* description of a clown who "whiſtled as he went for want of thought,"[10] is not more juſt than the description which the reverend Mr. *Blair,* in *The Grave,* a poem, gives of a school-boy crossing a church yard,

"Whiſtling aloud to bear his courage up."

The boy was very much frightened; but being ashamed of his fear, affected a lively and gay indifference. Since I have mentioned this poem, I muſt observe, that although there have been several editions of it both in Scotland, where it was firſt produced, and in London, I have found no notice taken of it by any author, except by Mr. *Hervey,* in his admired meditations;[11] yet there are

[9] *A Collection of Poems . . . . by several Hands,* 2. 230 (ed. 1758). For a note on the anthology and the editor, see *Hyp.* 5 n. 8.

[10] In *Cymon and Iphigenia.* Quoted also in *The Spectator,* 71.

[11] There were over forty editions of Blair's gloomy *The Grave* in the century following its publication (1743); in the later years it was printed with Gray's *Elegy. The Grave* was twice transposed into rhyme, and had the honor of serving as inspiration for some of William Blake's most powerful drawings.

In the *Life of Johnson* (1791) Boswell shows that he had followed the fortunes of his favorite in his mention of the editions which had been printed in the years between the date of this *Hypochondriack* and the biography; he also shows his independence of judgment in disagreeing with Johnson as to its merits (*Life of J.,* 3. 55):

> He told me that so long ago as 1748 he had read "*The Grave,* a Poem," but did not like it much. I differed from him; for though it is not equal throughout, and is seldom elegantly correct, it abounds in solemn thought, and poetical imagery beyond the common reach. The world has differed from him; for the poem has passed through many editions, and is ſtill much read by people of a serious caſt of mind.

In a footnote to this passage, Boswell regrets that "there are no memoirs of . . . . the authour of this poem," and supplies what he has been able to discover.

The notice given to Blair's poem by Hervey is slight; in his *Meditations among the Tombs* (1746) he quotes fifteen lines, and remarks in a footnote, "See a valuable poem, entitled, *The Grave.*" Hervey, too, was an author about whom Johnson and Boswell disagreed. During the tour to the Hebrides, Johnson scoffed at the "admired meditations," and improvised a *Meditation on a Pudding* in Hervey's most sonorous style; Boswell faithfully records it, but records also his own love for the work, which had "engaged [his] affections in [his] early years" (*Hebr.,* 400).

passages in it which well deserve more general attention from superior taſte and criticism. The schoolboy's fear of ghoſts, and his being aſhamed of it, is similar to what Ovid makes Paris acknowledge to Helen.

> "*Quæque timere libet pertimuisse pudet.*"
> We yield to fear; yet for our weakness blush.[12]

That fear is a necessary passion in human nature, at leaſt in that ſtate of exiſtence in which we now find ourselves, cannot be denied.[13] Perhaps it may be necessary even in a better ſtate, to preserve a continuance of felicity. Perhaps glorified spirits, tho' all tears be wiped from their eyes, and they may not be called upon to "join trembling" with celeſtial harmony, may have a certain degree of fear sufficient for safety, but not ſtrong enough to occasion pain; a degree of fear like the gentle solicitude of happy lovers upon earth.[14] But let us not grasp too forwardly at the eternal blazon, as to which, if we indulge speculation it should always be with the moſt submissive and respectful diſtance.

In our present ſtate, fear is not only unavoidable by rational beings, who know that many evils may probably, and some muſt certainly befall them, but as far as we can judge, it seems to be one of the preventives and correctives of human suffering. Accordingly, that great judge of human nature, *Ariſtotle*, when

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[12] *Heroides*, 16. 352, part of the passage used as motto to this paper. Boswell follows no consistent scheme of punctuation for his quotations; usually, however, in quoting a foreign author and translating the passage into English, he either includes both within quotation marks, or sets off the foreign phrasing by italics and the English by quotation marks.

[13] Cf. Rousseau, *Nouvelle Héloïse*, 1. 57:

> Tout homme craint de mourir, c'eſt la grande loi des êtres sensibles, sans laquelle toute espèce mortelle seroit bientôt détruite. Cette crainte eſt un simple mouvement de la nature, non-seulement indifférent, mais bon en lui-même et conforme à l'ordre.

See also *ibid.*, 3. 21.

[14] Cf. *Rev.*, 21. 4—"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." For Boswell's absurd concluding idea, cf. *Life of J.*, 3. 227:

> Johnson. ". . . . We do not know that even the angels are quite in a ſtate of security; nay we know that some of them have fallen. It may, therefore, perhaps be necessary, in order to preserve both men and angels in a ſtate of rectitude, that they should have continually before them the punishment of those who have deviated from it; but we may hope that by some other means a fall from rectitude may be prevented."

justly extolling the moral usefullness of tragedy, as medicine for the mind, tells us in a metaphorical definition taken from physick, that δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν—it by the means of pity and fear purges the passion.[15]

Here we find fear one of the principal remedies for the disorders of the passions; for by seeing the terrible effects of their excess, we are taught to moderate them, as much as we can, instead of either allowing them an unlimited indulgence, or attempting to practice the false philosophy of that rigid and haughty sect, which professed to extinguish them, or rather indeed to make one of them—pride—absorb all the rest; the very reverse of that enlightened counsel which prescribes, "be not high minded, but fear."[16]

There is a religious fear, which however misunderstood by the gloomy on one hand, and the giddy on the other, both of whom view it through the same false medium, is, when properly considered, not only highly rational, but truly agreeable: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."[17] The dismal apprehension that the Supreme Being is stern and severe, should be far from his creatures; and we are warned against it by our Saviour in the parable where the unprofitable servant thought God "a hard master."[18] The religious fear which I mean to inculcate, is that reverential awe for the Most High Ruler of the universe, mixed with affectionate gratitude and hope, by which our minds are kept steady, calm, and placid, at once exalted by the contemplation of greatness, and warmed by the contemplation of goodness, while both are contemplated with a reference to ourselves. I am sensible that this is a subject of so sublime and delicate a nature, that precise precepts ought not to be given, there

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[15] *Poetics*, 6. 2; Boswell alludes to the passage again in *Life of J.*, 3. 45. In the magazine text δι' was rendered δια (without accent), and accents were omitted from καὶ, τὴν, τοιούτων, παθημάτων, and κάθαρσιν; Boswell made no corrections.

[16] *Rom.* 11. 20. The rigid and haughty sect is the Stoics, for whom Boswell had little sympathy; cf. *Life of J.*, 1. 386, where Johnson scouts the idea that weather can affect the mind, and Bowell comments, "Such boasting of the mind is false elevation. 'I think the Romans call it Stoicism.' "

[17] *Prov.*, 1. 7.

[18] *Mtth.*, 25. 24.

being such a multiplicity of varieties suited to different individuals by reason of different associations of ideas, which, though their original composition eludes our keenest investigation, have formed mental substances, if that expression may be used, which will be wrought upon very differently by the same operations. I would only recommend to my readers piety in general; and let each practise that mode of devotion which he finds has the best influence upon his disposition and conduct.

But my intention when I sat down to write this paper was to caution my readers against the indulgence of unnecessary and excessive fear, which at times afflicts most men, but more especially a hypochondriack. *Shakespeare* observes, with much truth as well as poetical expression, that "present fears are less than horrible imaginings."[19] For, unless it be some extreme excruciating bodily torments, the impressions of which through the agonized senses are stronger than any imagination can produce, it is certain that the ills of life appear more dreadful at a distance than when actually felt. Sickness and poverty, and the loss of our dearest friends and relations, from the prospect of which we shrink with dismay, prove more mild in reality than in fancy, and bring along with them alleviations which cannot be discerned till they are close upon us. This reflection should make us less affected by the thoughts of their happening[20] to us, when these thoughts are forced upon our minds, for we should exert our reason to dispel false terrors, the *falsæ terrores*, of which the poet speaks;[21] and in proportion as terrors are greater than they should be, they are false.

I am however by no means of opinion with some, that we should habitually employ our minds in the contemplation of possible evils, in order that we may be less hurt by them when they actually happen, because such contemplation is certain uneasiness, whereas, that its objects shall ever exist is uncertain. We

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[19] *Macbeth*, 1. 3 . 136.

[20] Originally, *appearing;* corrected by a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 3. For a parallel to this passage cf. *The Rambler*, 29:

. . . . nor has any man found the evils of life so formidable in reality, as they were described to him by his own imagination, [since] every species of distress brings with it some peculiar supports, some unforeseen means of resisting, or power of enduring.

[21] Adapted from Horace, *Epist.*, 2. 1 . 212.

should therefore be acting as unwisely, as if we should while in full health undergo a course of disagreeable medicines against diseases to which human nature is subject, but with which we ourselves may never be attacked. The bitter potion is taken soon enough when we are obliged to swallow it. Besides, I am not at all clear that evils when they actually happen, will be less felt by us from having contemplated them long before. They will come loaded with additional darkness from the clouds of imagination, and if the mind be weakened, and worn by fanciful sufferings, it will be less able to bear a severe shock than if it met it with that sound vigour which is produced by security and happiness.

No. III. Dec. 1777.

[ON WAR]

———*Sævit toto Mars impius orbe.*—VIRG.[1]

And ruthless Mars raves wild o'er all the lands.—WARTON.

WHILE viewing, as travellers usually do, the remarkable objects of curiosity at Venice, I was conducted through the different departments of the Arsenal;[2] and as I contemplated that great storehouse of mortal engines, in which there is not only a large deposit of arms, but men are continually employed in making more, my thoughts *rebounded*, if I may use the expression, from what I beheld; and the effect was, that I was first as it were stunned into a state of amazement, and when I recovered from that, my mind expanded itself in reflections upon the horrid irrationality of war.

What those reflections were I do not precisely recollect. But the general impression dwells upon my memory; and however strange it may seem, my opinion of the irrationality of war is still associated with the Arsenal of Venice.

One particular however I well remember. When I saw work-

[1] *Georg.*, 1. 511. The translation by Joseph Warton (1722–1800), brother of Thomas Warton the literary historian, is taken from his edition of Virgil in Latin and English (1753); he himself translated only the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*.

[2] Boswell's visit was part of his "grand tour"; he addressed a letter from Venice on July 13, 1765.

It is possible that in this essay Boswell is deliberately taking a view opposite to his own personal tastes, as part of the discipline of *The Hypochondriack* (see Introduction, I . 2). Certainly through most of his life he admitted a fondness for soldiering. In his self-sketch (*Hebr.*, 58) he refers to the blighted military ambitions of his youth:

> His inclination was to be a soldier; but his father, a respectable Judge, had pressed him into the profession of the law.

This he repeats in his *Letters* for 1779–80, after describing his stay in Chester with Colonel Stuart's regiment as a "forthnight in mortal felicity" (2. 299):

> I had from my earliest years a love for the military life; and there is really in it an animation and relish of existence, which I have never found amongst any other set of men, except players, with whom you know I once lived a great deal. At the mess of Col. Stuart's regiment I was quite *the great man*, as we used to say; and I was at the same time all joyous and gay.

See also *Life of J.*, 1. 462, and *Hebr.*, 142, 156, 160, 166. It is only in his last

men engaged with grave assiduity in fashioning weapons of death, I was ſtruck with wonder at the ſhortſightedness, the *cæcæ mentes* of human beings, who were thus ſoberly preparing the inſtruments of deſtruction of their own ſpecies. I have ſince found upon a cloſer ſtudy of man, that my wonder might have been ſpared; becauſe there are very few men whoſe minds are ſufficiently enlarged to comprehend univerſal or even extenſive good. The views of moſt individuals are limited to their own happineſs; and the workmen whom I beheld ſo buſy in the Arſenal of Venice ſaw nothing but what was good in the labour for which they received ſuch wages as procured them the comforts of life. That their immediate ſatisfaction was not hindered by a view of the remote conſequential and contingent evils for which alone their labours could be at all uſeful, would not ſurpriſe one who has had a tolerable ſhare of experience in life. We muſt have the teleſcope of philoſophy to make us perceive diſtant ills; nay, we know that there are individuals of our ſpecies to whom the immediate miſery of others is nothing in comparison with their own advantage—for we know that in every age there have been

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years that he says wearily, after a visit to Bennet Langton's regiment of militia (*Life of J.*, 2. 449), "as I candidly owned to you, I had enough of a camp."

However, Boswell's delight was never caused by *war!* In his *Correspondence [with] Andrew Erskine*, 65, a glowing description of the officer's life includes nothing but his social opportunities in London:

> I am thinking of the brilliant scenes of happiness, which I shall enjoy as an officer of the guards. How I shall be acquainted with all the grandeur of a court, and all the elegance of dress and diversions; become a favorite of miniſters of ſtate, and the adoration of ladies of quality, beauty, and fortune! How many parties of pleasure shall I have in town! How many fine jaunts to the noble seats of dukes, lords, and members of parliament in the country! I am thinking of the perfect knowledge which I shall acquire of men and manners, of the intimacies which I shall have the honour to form with the learned and ingenious in every science, and of the many amusing literary anecdotes which I shall pick up.

See also *Hebr.*, 160, where he tells how the bagpipes filled his mind with "a crowd of sensations with which sober rationality has nothing to do," among which was a "thoughtless inclination for war."

In writing this essay, Boswell has drawn upon his reading to support a *rational* attitude toward military life. *The Adventurer* (number 99) deals severely with military heroes, mentioning Alexander the Great and Charles of Sweden; *The Spectator* combines in number 152 the themes presented in this and the foregoing *Hypochondriack*. Boswell admits one debt to Rousseau in quoting the *Project for Perpetual Peace*, but he was perhaps borrowing unconsciously from the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, as well; for this debt, and for the opinions of Johnson, see notes below.

found men very willing to perform the office of executioner even for a moderate hire.

To prepare instruments for the destruction of our species at large, is what I now see may very well be done by ordinary men, without starting, when they themselves are to run no risk. But I shall never forget, nor cease to wonder at a most extraordinary instance of thoughtless intrepidity which I had related to me by a cousin of mine, now a lieutenant-colonel in the British army, who was upon guard when it happened.[3] A soldier of one of the regiments in garrison at Minorca, having been found guilty of a capital crime, was brought out to be hanged. They had neglected to have a rope in readiness, and the shocking business was at a stand. The fellow, with a spirit and alertness which in a general would, upon a difficult and trying emergency, have been very great presence of mind and conduct, stript the lace off his hat, said this will do, and actually made it serve as the fatal cord.

The irrationality of war is, I suppose, admitted by almost all Men: I say almost all; because I have myself met with men who attempted seriously to maintain that it is an agreeable occupation and one of the chief means of human happiness. I must own that although I use the plural number here, I should have used the dual, had I been writing in Greek; for I never met with but two men who supported such a paradox; and one of them was a tragick poet, and one a Scotch Highlander. The first had his imagination so much in a blaze with heroic sentiments, with the "pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war,"[4] that he did not advert to its miseries, as one dazzled with the pageantry of a magnificent funeral thinks not of the pangs of dissolution and the dismal corpse. The second had his attention so eagerly fixed on the advantage which accrued to his *clan* from "the trade of war," that he could think of it only as a good.

We are told by some writers, who assume the character of philosophers, that war is necessary to take off the superfluity of the human species, or at least to rid the world of numbers of idle

[3] This instance obviously belongs to *Hyp.* 2, as an illustration of "a state of mind so dull as to be insensible of fear." See note 6, *Hyp.* 2. Later on, Boswell states that it is "the peculiar privilege of . . . . a periodical paper" to insert in new essays "something supplementary to [the] last number" (*Hyp.* 22).

[4] *Othello*, 3. 3 . 354.

and profligate men who are a burthen upon every community, and would grow an insupportable burthen, were they to live as long as men do in the usual course of nature. But there is unquestionably no reason to fear a superfluity of mankind, when we know that although perhaps the time "when every rood of land maintain'd its man"[5] is a poetical exaggeration, yet vigorous and well directed industry can raise sustenance for such a proportion of people in a certain space of territory, as is astonishing to us who are accustomed to see only moderate effects of labour;[6] and when we also know what immense regions of the terrestrial globe in very good climates are uninhabited. In these there is room for millions to enjoy existence. In cultivating these, the idle and profligate, expelled from their original societies, might be employed and gradually reformed, which would be better surely, than continuing the practice of periodical destruction, which is also indiscriminate, and involves the best equally with the worst of men.

I have often thought that if war should cease over all the face of the earth, for a thousand years, its reality would not be believed at such a distance of time, notwithstanding the faith of authentick records in every nation. Were mankind totally free from every tincture of prejudice in favour of those gallant exertions which could not exist were there not the evil of violence to combat; had they never seen in their own days, or been told by their fathers or grandfathers, of battles, and were there no traces remaining of the *art of war*, I have no doubt that they would treat as fabulous or allegorical, the accounts in history, of prodigious armies being formed, of men who engaged themselves for an unlimited time, under the penalty of immediate death, to obey implicitly the orders of commanders to whom they were not attached either by affection or by interest; that those armies were sometimes led with toilsome expedition over vast tracts of land, sometimes crouded into ships, and obliged to endure tedious, unhealthy, and perilous voyages; and that the purpose of all this toil and danger was not

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[5] Boswell is quoting from memory Goldsmith's *Deserted Village:*

When every rood of *ground* maintained its man.

[6] Compare the benevolent economics of M. Wolmar in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, 4. 10; 5. 2.

to obtain any comfort or pleasure, but to be in a situation to encounter other armies; and that those opposite multitudes the individuals of which had no cause of quarrel, no ill-will to each other, continued for hours engaged with patient and obstinate perseverance, while thousands were slain, and thousands crushed and mangled by diversity of wounds.

We who have from our earliest years had our minds filled with scenes of war of which we have read in the books that we most reverence and most admire, who have remarked it in every revolving century, and in every country that has been discovered by navigators, even in the gentle and benign regions of the southern oceans;[7] we who have seen all the intelligence, power and ingenuity of our own nation employed in war, who have been accustomed to peruse Gazettes, and have had our friends and relations killed or sent home to us wretchedly maimed; we cannot without a steady effort of reflection be sensible of the improbability that rational beings should act so irrationally as to unite in deliberate plans, which must certainly produce the direful effects which war is known to do. But I have no doubt that if the project for a perpetual peace which the *Abbé de St. Pierre* sketched, and *Rousseau* improved,[8] were to take place, the incredibility of war would after the lapse of some ages be universal.

Were there any good produced by war which could in any degree compensate its direful effects; were better men to spring up from the ruins of those who fall in battle, as more beautiful material forms sometimes arise from the ashes of others; or were those who escape from its destruction to have an increase of happiness; in short, were there any great beneficial effect to follow it, the notion of its irrationality would be only the notion of

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[7] This is the idealized Otaheite of the sentimentalists, which in 1776 Boswell wished to visit for three years in order to "be satisfied what pure nature could do for man" (*Life of J.*, 3. 57). He adopts a different tone in later essays. (See *Hyp.* 4, 9, 20, 29, 46, 59.)

[8] The title-page of this work reads, "*An Extract from a Project for a perpetual Peace, of the Abbé de St. Pierre*, by J. J. Rousseau, citizen of Geneva." The Count de St. Pierre had turned over all the papers of his uncle the Abbé to Rousseau, who was to abridge the works and annotate them. The citizen of Geneva found the task distasteful, and resigned it after finishing the project for peace, which he enlarged considerably.

narrow comprehension. But we find that war is followed by no general good whatever. The power, the glory, or the wealth of a very few may be enlarged. But the people in general, upon both sides, after all the sufferings are passed, pursue their ordinary occupations, with no difference from their former state. The evils therefore of war, upon a general view of humanity are as the French say, *à pure perte*, a mere loss without any advantage, unless indeed furnishing subjects for history, poetry, and painting. And although it should be allowed that mankind have gained enjoyment in these respects, I suppose it will not be seriously said, that the misery is overbalanced. At any rate, there is already such a store of subjects, that an addition to them would be dearly purchased by more wars.

I am none of those who would set up their notions against the opinion of the world; on the contrary, I have such a respect for that authority, as to doubt of my own judgment when it opposes that of numbers probably as wise as I am. But when I maintain the irrationality of war, I am not contradicting the opinion, but the practice of the world. For, as I have already observed, its irrationality is generally admitted. *Horace* calls *Hannibal*, *demens*, a madman; and *Pope* gives the same appellation to Alexander the Great and Charles XII.

"From Macedonia's madman to the Swede."[9]

How long war will continue to be practised, we have no means of conjecturing. Civilization,[10] which it might have been expected would have abolished it, has only refined its savage rudeness. The irrationality remains, though we have learnt *insanire certa ratione modoque*,[11] to have a method in our madness.

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[9] It is not Horace, but Juvenal, who calls Hannibal *demens*, in his tenth satire, 166. For other instances of confusion between these poets, see *Hyp.* 26 n. 8. The line from Pope occurs in the *Essay on Man*, 4. 220.

[10] *The Hypochondriack* challenges the lexicographer with this word. Cf. *Life of J.*, 2. 178:

> [Johnson] would not admit *civilization*, but only *civility*. With great deference to him, I thought *civilization*, from to *civilize*, better in the sense opposed to *barbarity*, than *civility*; as it is better to have a distinct word for each sense, than one word with two senses.

[11] Horace, *Sat.*, 2. 3 . 271. Quoted also by *The Spectator*, 398.

That amiable religion which "proclaims peace on earth,"[12] hath not as yet made war to cease. The furious passions of men, modified as they are by moral instruction, still operate with much force; and by a perpetual fallacy, even the conscientious in each contending nation think they may join in war, because they each believe they are repelling an aggressor.[13] Were the mild and humane doctrine of those Christians, who are called *Quakers*, which Mr. *Jenyns* has lately embellished with his elegant pen, to prevail, human felicity would gain more than we can well conceive.[14] But perhaps it is necessary that mankind in this state

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[12] *Luke*, 2. 14. Boswell duplicates this criticism of civilized Christian nations in the *Life of J.*, 2. 154:

> Every humane mind must surely applaud the earnestness with which [Johnson] averted the calamity of war; a calamity so dreadful, that it is astonishing how civilized, nay, Christian nations, can deliberately continue to renew it.

See also *ibid.*, 1. 455 n. 1. However, in 1778 Johnson insisted on the dignity of the warlike professions (*ibid.*, 3. 301):

> We talked of war. JOHNSON. "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea." BOSWELL. "Lord Mansfield does not." JOHNSON. "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in a company of General Officers and Admirals who have been in service, he would shrink; he'd wish to creep under the table." BOSWELL. "No; he'd think he could *try* them all." [Lord M. was Lord Chief Justice.] JOHNSON. ". . . . No, Sir; were Socrates and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden both present in any company, and Socrates to say, 'Follow me, and hear a lecture on philosophy'; and Charles, laying his hand on his sword, to say, 'Follow me, and dethrone the Czar'; a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates. Sir, the impression is universal; yet it is strange. . . . . But, Sir, the profession of soldiers and sailors has the dignity of danger. Mankind reverences those who have got over fear, which is so general a weakness." SCOTT. "But is not courage mechanical, and to be acquired?" JOHNSON. "Why, yes, Sir, in a collective sense. Soldiers consider themselves only as parts of a great machine. . . . . !"

See also *Hebr.*, 373. In these conversations, perhaps, lies the germ of this number of *The Hypochondriack.*

[13] Contrast to this reasonable statement Johnson's pronouncement criticizing Dryden's new epic machinery of contending guardian angels (*Life of Dryden*):

> He considered the epick as necessarily including some kind of supernatural agency, and had imagined a new kind of contest between the guardian angels of kingdoms, of whom he conceived that each might be represented zealous for his charge, without any intended opposition to the purposes of the Supreme Being, of which all created minds must in part be ignorant . . . . In the scheme of Dryden there is one great difficulty, which yet he would perhaps have had address enough to surmount. In a war justice can be but on one side; and, to entitle the hero to the protection of angels, he must fight in defence of the right. Yet some of the celestial beings, thus opposed to each other, must have been represented as defending guilt.

[14] Boswell is perhaps alluding to *A View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion* (1776) by Soame Jenyns (1703–1787); for the controversy aroused by the work, see *Hyp.* 22 n. 16.

of existence, the purpose of which is so mysterious, should ever suffer the woes of war.

To relieve my readers from reflections which they may think too abstract, I shall conclude this paper with a few observations upon actual war. In ancient times when a battle was fought man to man, or as somebody has very well expressed it, was a groupe of duels, there was an opportunity for individuals to distinguish themselves by vigour and bravery. One who was "*robustus acri militia,* hardy from keen warfare,"[15] could gratify his ambition for fame, by the exercise of his own personal qualities. It was therefore more reasonable then, for individuals to enlist, than it is in modern times; for, a battle now is truly nothing else than a huge conflict of opposite engines worked by men, who are themselves as machines directed by a few; and the event is not so frequently decided by what is intentionally done, as by accidents happening in the dreadful confusion. It is as if two towns in opposite territories should be set on fire at the same time, and victory should be declared to the inhabitants of that in which the flames were least destructive. We hear much of the conduct of generals; and *Addison* himself has represented the Duke of *Marlborough* directing an army in battle, as an "angel riding in a whirlwind and directing the storm."[16] Nevertheless I much doubt if upon many occasions the immediate schemes of a commander have had certain effect; and I believe Sir *Callaghan O'Bralachan* in Mr. *Macklin's Love A la-mode* gives a very just account of a modern battle: "There is so much doing every where that we cannot tell what is doing any where."[17]

Boswell frequently reveals his own interest in the Friends; see *Life of J.*, 1. 535, and 2. 524:

I have always loved the simplicity of manners, and the spiritual-mindedness of the Quakers; and talking with Mr. Lloyd, I observed, that the essential part of religion was piety, a devout intercourse with the Divinity; and that many a man was a Quaker without knowing it.

See also *Hyp.* 54, 55, where Boswell expresses sympathy for the mystics and the quietists.

[15] Horace, *Carm.*, 3. 2 . 2.

[16] Adapted from a line in *The Campaign.*

[17] Boswell quotes from memory a speech in Act I:

Why, Madam, there is so much doing everywhere, there is no knowing what is done anywhere . . . .

For a note on the author see *Hyp.* 53.

Very different indeed is the opinion of Mr. *A. Boyer*, who in his English and French Dictionary gives us with great gravity such a detail of an engagement, as shows that he supposed it to be carried on with as much design and order as the martial performances at a review. As I hope it may divert my readers as well as it has done myself, I shall present it exactly in his own words:

Description *of a* Battle.

"The two armies being in sight, the canon roars on each side; and the "signal for the fight being given, they both move, and begin the encounter. "In the height of danger, the generals show their intrepidity by preserving "their cool temper, and by giving their orders without emotion, and with- "out hurry. In the close engagements, the officers perform wonders, or "show extraordinary valour and judgment; and seconded by their men, "who fight like lions, they cut the enemy in pieces, kill and overthrow all "they meet in their way, break through battalions and bear down squad- "rons. Upon the point of being overpowered by numbers, they resolutely "sustain the effort of the enemy; and the generals being informed by their "aids de camp of what passes on that side, cause succours to march thither "with all speed, revive the spirits of the soldiers by their presence, rally the "broken battalions, bring them up again to the charge, repulse the enemy, "drive them before them, regain the ground they had lost, retrieve the "whole affair, pursue the enemy close, trample them under foot, or ride "over them, entirely disable them, put all that resist to the sword; and "after having sustained continual discharges of cannon and small shot, "and gained an entire and complete victory, cause a retreat to be sounded, "and lie on the field of battle, whilst the air resounds with the flourishes of "trumpets."

No. IV. Jan. 1778.

[ON EXCESS]

——— *Nam id ego arbitror*
Adprime in vita esse utile ut ne quid nimis.—TERENT.[1]
"For this I hold to be the golden rule
"Of life, too much of one thing's good for nothing."—COLMAN.

EXCESS of every sort will be found upon due consideration to be wrong. Terence, in the passage which I have chosen as a motto for my present paper, expresses this opinion in the most general and unlimited sense. But, although all men be fully sensible that some kinds of excess are hurtful, I believe few have thought so extensively upon the subject, as to have a conviction that there is no kind of excess which is not pernicious; and therefore it may not be an idle subject of speculation to consider the justice of the sentiment in a number of instances, various enough to shew that it is universally applicable to human nature.

An excess in eating, called Gluttony, and an excess in the use of fermented liquors, called Drunkenness, are so visibly destructive in their effects, that though they were not vices by positive prohibition, mankind could not but agree in condemning them; yet, however certainly intemperance produces a complication of deformity and diseases, the immediate pleasure of its gratification is so great, that we find a large proportion of mankind indulge in it. The savages devour with greediness immoderate quantities of such rude sustenance as they have; and travellers uniformly concur in attesting their violent fondness for strong drink.[2] In civilized

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[1] *Andr.*, 1. 1 . 33; quoted also in *The Spectator*, 105. The translation of Terence (1765) by George Colman (the elder, 1732–1794) raised him from the position of mere farce writer to that of an important comic dramatist. In his middle years he became proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, and produced Goldsmith's plays. He was a member of "The Club."

The theme of this essay, and much of its contrast between wealth and poverty, is closely analogous to *The Rambler*, 38. See also *The Spectator*, 346, on the generous uses of wealth; and 150 on the proper display of it.

[2] Boswell is willing to use this savage propensity as a proof that a taste for strong drink is "natural" in *Hyp.* 30. For notes on civilized intemperance, see *Hyp.* 8; for Boswell's support of the "elegant and not less effectual" stimulants of civilized life, which here he endeavors to criticize, see *Hyp.* 17, 30–33, 58.

nations, more elegant, but not less effectual methods of intemperance are practised. Excess in eating is stimulated and increased by the infinite exertions of the art of cookery; and excess in drinking is promoted by the seducing taste of rich wines, by the gaiety and splendour associated with grand entertainments, and by mingling love and friendship, amiable and valuable qualities, with the heat and hurry of spirits arising from intoxication. As I intend to treat of drinking in a future paper appropriated to that subject alone, I must here pull the reins, and stop myself in a career of lucubration to which I am prone at the time; although perhaps both I and my readers may have reason to wish I had not done so: for by checking a run down hill, I may have hard work of it in driving towards another quarter; and my readers, instead of being amused with the celerity of my motion, may be wearied with my heavy drudging pace.

It must be acknowledged that excess is quite a relative term, applicable in different degrees to different individuals. Yet we all very well understand the *ne quid nimis*, "the having or doing nothing in an extreme degree," which my motto inculcates as an useful lesson for passing life easily and comfortably; and the error of mankind is in imagining that they cannot possibly have too much of those things which are universally desired; or at least in individuals imagining their own particular capacities to be larger and more vigorous than they really are.

That too much wealth is an evil must appear a paradox; because we do not find those, who are possessed of the greatest opulence, complaining that they are too rich. They do not even go so far as the wretched man in the fable, who formed a faint wish to be eased of the burthen of life, but upon the approach of death, found that he was very willing to continue to bear the load which oppressed him; for they never utter a wish to be rid of the embarrassment of riches. Yet I am perfectly convinced that to have a great deal more wealth than a man can employ, is to be unhappy, though the possessor may not be sensible of the cause. It is like having much more body than one has spirit to animate, the superfluous part of which is therefore a lifeless, unwieldy, and irksome mass. I do not maintain that a man is the worse for being plump, or, as the French say, *en bon point*. Let him be easy in his circumstances. Let him have peace and plenty, as the

phrase is; so full a share of fortune, as never to be in want, or suffer the probable apprehensions of it.

I am by no means a disciple of those philosophers who pretend that poverty is not an evil.[3] In *that* I do not require *excess* to make unhappiness. An overgrown fortune I hold to be an evil. But a miserable scanty one I hold to be as certainly an evil. Nay, I hold the latter to be worse than the former; for, to resume the corporeal metaphor, we are told by physicians that the diseases which proceed from inanition are worse than those which proceed from repletion.

To understand how too much wealth is an evil to its owner, we must consider that though there is a pleasure in drinking from a plentiful fountain, which poetical fancy has frequently introduced into descriptions of felicity,[4] there is no similarity between that, and

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[3] See the extended conversation (on the theories of Rousseau) in the *Life of J.*, 1. 509 ff., ending in Johnson's pronouncement,

"When I was running about this town a very poor fellow, I was a great arguer for the advantage of poverty; but I was, at the same time, very sorry to be poor. Sir, all the arguments which are brought to represent poverty as no evil shew it to be evidently a great evil. You never find people labouring to convince you that you may live very happily upon a plentiful fortune."

In the debates on wealth and its uses, Johnson usually insisted that riches were to be desired (see *Hyp.* 8, 20, 40, 52, 56–58, and notes); on occasion, however, he maintained that great wealth was an evil, in much the same spirit as shown in this essay by Boswell. See *The Rambler*, 38:

Poverty is an evil always in our view, an evil complicated with so many circumstances of uneasiness and vexation, that every man is studious to avoid it. Some degree of riches is therefore required, that we may be exempt from the gripe of necessity. . . . . But it almost always happens, that the man who grows rich, changes his notions of poverty, states his wants by some new measure, and from flying the enemy that pursued him, bends his endeavours to overtake those whom he sees before him. . . . . Whoever shall look heedfully upon those who are eminent for their riches, will not think their condition such as that he should hazard his quiet, and much less his virtue, to obtain it. For all that great wealth generally gives above a moderate fortune, is more room for the freaks of caprice, and more privilege for ignorance and vice, a quicker succession of flatteries, and a larger circle of voluptuousness.

See also Johnson's remark that wealth can exclude "but one evil—poverty" (*Life of J.*, 3. 182), and his sardonic comment on great fortune in 1781 (*ibid.*, 4. 146):

"I have not observed, (said he,) that men of very large fortunes enjoy anything extraordinary that makes happiness. What has the Duke of Bedford? What has the Duke of Devonshire? The only great instance that I have ever known of the enjoyment of wealth was, that of Jamaica Dawkins, who, going to visit Palmyra, and hearing that the way was infested by robbers, hired a troop of Turkish horse to guard him."

[4] A favorite figure with Boswell; see the use of it in *Hyp.* 22 n. 10, 54, 55; *Life of J.*, 3. 304; *Hebr.*, 317.

taking from an immense ſtore of riches what is ſufficient for our use. For unemployed wealth grows offenſive like ſtagnate water, and contaminates its poſſeſſor. The ruſt of a hoard corrupts whatever is in contact with it, without inſiſting upon that fretful anxiety for the preſervation of ſuperfluous wealth which is almoſt without exception its concomitant. A man feels himſelf weak, and has a mean impreſſion of his own character when he is conſcious of being the maſter of heaps of uſeleſs money. I muſt however always keep in view what I have ſaid as to exceſs being relative. For I admit that no fortune is too large for ſome extraordinary men, whoſe taſte, magnificence and generoſity are unbounded. Nay, I will even admit, that a miſer who has extent of thought and force of mind ſufficient to make his ſuperfluous wealth, though hid in the earth, bear the fruit of power and influence in his imagination, cannot really be ſaid to have riches as a curſe. But how few of either of theſe characters, which I have juſt now mentioned, are to be found! It is not extravagant to affirm that men capable of enjoying immenſe wealth, are as rare as men able to bear the enormous armour of Goliah.[5] I knew a baronet, who, after improving his manners by travelling many years in the ſouthern parts of Europe, made a very handſome figure in his own country, upon a moderate eſtate, living with hoſpitality and elegance, and beloved by all his neighbours. But upon his ſucceſſion to an earldom and a large fortune, he ſunk under the preſſure of affluence, and finding that he was unable to fill up wider outlines, he contracted himſelf into a narrower and narrower ſpace, and gradually became a parſimonious miſerable recluſe.

If our power of enjoying wealth do not enlarge in proportion as our wealth is augmented, its ſuperfluity muſt make us unhappy. The pleaſure of exiſtence is in the ſucceſſive gratification of different deſires. Inſipid then and wearisome muſt be his ſtate, who, from having more than he can uſe, has no deſires to gratify. Continual fullneſs prevents every keen ſenſation, and exiſtence is even worſe than "flowing in one ſad tenor," for it "creams and

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[5] ". . . . and the weight of the coat was five thouſand ſhekels of braſs . . . . and his ſpear's head weighed ſix hundred ſhekels of iron." *1 Sam.*, 17. 5–7. Cf. the eſſays on wealth—*Hyp.* 56, 57.

mantles like a ſtanding pool."[6] The Dutch, who have much ſagacity of contrivance in many reſpects, have in what they call *a verbeetering huys*,[7] (that is to ſay, a correcting and amending houſe, a houſe for making people better)—an admirable method of curing laziness. A fellow who will not work, is put into a large reſervoir of water, which takes him up to the chin; a cock is then turned, ſo as to let more water run in upon him, and he is ſhewn a pump. If he exerts himſelf with active force, he prevents the water from riſing, and breathes freely; but if he does not ply the pump, the water ſoon gets up upon him and he is ſuffocated. An inundation of wealth will be equally fatal to a man's happineſs, if he does not throw it off by vigorous exertions. *Aurum potabile* will choak him; and when drowning in Pactolus's ſtreams, it will be no conſolation to him that they have golden ſands.

Bodily ſtrength in excess need not be dreaded as an evil in this luxurious age;[8] yet the ancients have recorded for inſtruction, as well as curioſity, the hiſtory of *Milo*, who after having knocked down oxen with his fiſt, and performed other athletic wonders, was at laſt crushed to death in the cleft of a huge tree, which he was attempting to tear aſunder. We ſhould not repine at not having extraordinary force which may tempt us to venture upon extraordinary dangers, and even although we were enſured of ſafety, there is ſomething monſtrous in differing greatly from thoſe around us. Though to be like Saul among the people may do very well for their captain and ſovereign, a private man would not wiſh to be a ſhew, like the ſtrong man of Kent.[9]

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[6] A quotation from memory of *Mch. of Ven.*, I. 1. 89:

Do cream and mantle like a ſtanding *pond.*

This is a favorite line; Boſwell uſes it again, misquoting as he does here, in *Hyp.* 68 and in *Letters of B.*, I. 192.

[7] This is perhaps one of the notes on the condition of the poor in the Seven Provinces, which Johnſon aſked Boſwell to gather, and which Boſwell, writing the *Life*, regrets having neglected (*Life of J.*, I. 550).

[8] This is the only inſtance in which Boſwell joins the cry of Eſtimate Brown and others againſt luxury as the chief curſe of the age (ſee Introduction, III. 1). Contraſt to this conventional remark, *Hyp.* 8 and notes.

[9] Milo of Crotona was a celebrated champion in wreſtling at the Olympic and Pythian games; there are innumerable tales of his feats of ſtrength. The

Too much power also is an evil; for great power in an imperfect being occasions real unhappiness. It is impossible to place the infelicity of power more strongly before the mind than in the following noble passage of Dr. Johnson's Vanity of Human Wishes.[10]

> What gave great Villars to th' assassin's knife?
> And fix'd disease on Harley's closing life?
> What murder'd Wentworth, and what exiled Hyde,
> By kings protected and to kings allied?
> What but their wish indulg'd in courts to shine,
> And power too great to keep or to resign.

There is no man endowed with the moral sense, who has a great deal of power, but must have uneasy doubts if he makes the best use of it, and it exposes him to incessant solicitations, so that his life is never quiet. What a relief from importunity is it when one can say with truth, "it is not in my power!"

However coldness and indifference may be unpleasant; yet excess of love or fondness is bad, not only as it is not lasting, but because it is disagreeable at the time. It is well said in the *Beggar's Opera,*

> A curse attends that woman's love,
> Who always would be pleasing;
> The pertness of the billing dove,
> Like tickling is but teasing.

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story of his death, as usually told, is that in his old age, seeing a tree trunk split partly open by woodcutters, he endeavored to open it farther, but the wedge slipped out; the wood closed on his hands, and he was killed by wolves.

Saul "from his shoulders and upward . . . . was higher than any of the people" (*1 Sam.*, 9. 2).

I can find no records of a Kentish Hercules. Possibly Boswell is thinking of the London tavern-keeper, Thomas Topham, who performed feats of strength in London and the shires; his performances are described in Wanley's *Wonders*, which Boswell knew (see *Hyp.* 48). Topham (1710?–1749) was apprenticed carpenter, and became an inn-keeper, but his income was chiefly derived from exhibiting his strength. His greatest feat, raising three hogsheads of water, was accomplished in celebration of the capture of Portobello in 1741; the British Museum is said to preserve a pewter dish which he made into a tight roll in 1737, with the names of witnesses who observed the feat. See John Timbs, *History of Clubs and Club Life*, London 1872.

[10] For Boswell's delight in this poem, see *Hyp.* 55.

And I appeal to my fair readers of experience, or of lively imaginations, if the satire does not apply as justly to fondling men, who are perpetually sweetening and endearing their wives or mistresses: an excess of lusciousness is nauseous and disgusting unless to people of very peculiar taste indeed.

Even an excess of pleasure is an evil. For, strange as it may seem, it is most certainly true, that in our present state of being an extreme degree of pleasure turns into pain; as the author of Virtue, an Ethick Epistle, has very happily expressed it.[11]

> Till languor suffering on the rack of bliss,
> Confess that man was never made for this.

Too much sensibility or quickness of feeling, so as to be "trembling alive all over,"[12] is doubtless a misfortune; and yet, without a good share of sensibility, how dull or insipid is life!

Every body acknowledges without opposition, or contest upon nice distinctions, the justness of the phrases, too much talkativeness, too much silence, too much openness, too much reserve. Serjeant Kite in the Recruiting Officer humorously invites to his drum-head, all husbands who have too much wife. We are accustomed to hear and approve the proverb, "Too much familiarity begets contempt;" and that which Mr. Colman has given as the translation of *ne quid nimis* in my motto---"Too much of one thing's good for nothing." Nay, it is an apostolick advice---"Be not righteous over much."[13]

I am in doubt what to say of too much knowledge, which

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[11] Cf. *Life of J.*, 3. 226:

> The feeling of languor which succeeds the animation of gaiety, is itself a very severe pain; and when the mind is then vacant, a thousand disappointments and vexations rush in and excruciate. Will not many even of my fairest readers allow this to be true?

Boswell's note to his own observation introduces the same quotation used in illustration in this essay:

> But I recollect a couplet quite apposite to my subject in *Virtue an Ethick Epistle*, a beautiful and instructive poem, by an anonymous writer, in 1758. [Couplet follows.]

Swift expresses the same idea in his *Thoughts on Various Subjects (Works*, 9. 218):

> All fits of pleasure are balanced by an equal degree of pain or languor; it is like spending this year part of next year's revenue.

[12] Pope, *Essay on Man*, 1. 197. For a discussion of Boswell's consciousness of his own exaggerated sensitiveness, see *Hyp.* 37 n. 7.

[13] *Ecc.*, 7. 16. Quoting from memory, Boswell forgets his exact source.

indeed is very rare: "Too much learning doth make thee mad,"[14] was an ignorant speech though uttered from a high place. There may, to be sure, be a load of "learned lumber"[15] which will confuse the head, and a man may have more knowledge, than he has judgement to regulate. Upon which I would make the same remark as upon a man's having more wealth than he can employ. But knowledge is in general so valuable, that an abundance of it is scarcely within the probable bounds of fear.

Too much wisdom in its just meaning we cannot have; though much of the unhappiness of human life is occasioned by false wisdom. True wisdom will make us ever mindful of our own weakness and imperfection in this infancy of being, while our views become gradually enlarged, and our notions exalted.[16]

But my readers will I fear be more impressed with a proposition humiliating to my power of entertaining them, than with any of the various particulars which I have endeavoured to illustrate. I mean they will think that there is too much of this paper. I shall therefore at once conclude, that I may not seem to have written so long since I read my motto, as entirely to forget it.

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[14] *Acts*, 26. 24—Governor Festus to St. Paul, before Agrippa.

[15] Pope, *Essay on Crit.*, 613. See also *Hyp.* 50. For Boswell's doubts as to his own mental capacities, cf. *Life of J.*, 3. 460:

> Boswell. "By associating with you, Sir, I am always getting an accession of wisdom. But perhaps a man, after knowing his own character—the limited strength of his own mind, should not be desirous of having too much wisdom, considering, *quid valeat humeri*, how little he can carry."

See also *Hyp.* 6 n. 14, 21 n. 19, 50, 52. These ideas were perhaps induced by the nervousness produced in Boswell by protracted thinking—cf. *Hyp.* 26, 53, 65, 67.

[16] Cf. *Hyp.* 39 n. 10.

No. V. Feb. 1778.

[ON HYPOCHONDRIA]

Διὰ τί πάντες ὅσοι περιττοὶ γεγόνασιν ἄνδρες, ἢ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν, ἢ πολιτικὴν, ἢ ποίησιν, ἢ τέχνας, φαίνονται μελαγχολικοὶ ὄντες;

—ARISTOT.[1]

Why is it that all men who have excelled in philosophy, in politicks, in poetry, or in the arts, have been subject to melancholy?

ARISTOTLE, whose profound investigation and variety of knowledge I always consider with wonder and reverence, appears to have admitted, the opinion that melancholy is the concomitant of distinguished genius; and indeed he illustrates the opinion with much philosophical ability, and many remarks upon real life, as it fell under his own observation, selecting at the same time renowned characters of antiquity, to whom melancholy was said to be constitutional.

We Hypochondriacks may be glad to accept of this compliment from so great a master of human nature, and to console ourselves in the hour of gloomy distress, by thinking that our sufferings mark our superiority. I may use the expression *we Hypochondriacks*, when addressing myself to my atrabilious brethren in general, and not be afraid of giving offence; though I should not chuse to do it to any particular person, as there might be some danger from irritable delicacy. Hypochondriacks themselves are not agreed that they have reason to be vain, or proud of their malady; and even if that were the case, it might not be quite safe to single one out. I remember hearing a late celebrated infidel tell that he was not at all pleased when the infidel wife of his friend, a poet of some eminence, addressed him in a company in London, "we Deists."—Speak for yourself, Madam, said he abruptly. And yet we are sure that Deists are exceedingly vain of their profession or way of thinking, or whatever they please to call it—for nothing but vanity could make

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[1] *Problemata*, 30. 1. The magazine text gave πέριττοι for περιττοὶ; φιλοοφιάν for φιλοσοφίαν; φαινόνται for φαίνονται; μελαγχόλικοι for μελαγχολικοὶ; Boswell made no corrections.

them proclaim it to the world, when they are sure it can do no good to any body, and may do harm to many.[2]

But whether from the diffidence which Hypochondria occasions, or from having closely ſtudied numbers affected with that disease; I muſt, with all due reſpect to Ariſtotle, beg leave to doubt the proposition, that it is peculiarly to be found in men of remarkable excellence. And I think it is of importance that the proposition should not be believed—because I am certain that many who might have prevented the disease from coming to any height, had they checked its firſt appearances, have not only not[3] reſiſted it, but have truely cherished it, from the erroneous flattering notion that they were making sure of the undoubted though painful characteriſtick of excellence, as young ladies submit without complaint to have their ears pierced that they may be decorated with brilliant ornaments.[4]

Melancholy, or Hypochondria, like the fever or gout, or any other disease, is incident to all sorts of men, from the wiſeſt to the moſt foolish. And I can assure my readers that I have found as dull and as coarse mortals; nay, as silly creatures as ever appeared upon earth, who had all the symptoms of it, and were as miserable from it as was compatible with their conſtitutions. For I do not dispute that men are miserable in a greater or lesser degree in proportion to their underſtanding and sensibility.[5] It is not every man who can be exquisitely miserable, any more than exquisitely

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[2] The infidel was David Hume, and the lady was the wife of David Mallet (né Malloch!—the friend of Thomson, and author of various plays and poems, notably such imitations of old ballads as *William and Margaret*, published in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*). The anecdote of "we Deists" is told with greater gentleness by Lord Charlemont, according to a note by Birkbeck Hill (*Life of J.*, 2. 9 n. 4).

[3] *Not* was omitted in the original and supplied by a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 6.

[4] This sensible advice was that given to Boswell by Johnson in his letter on Cheyne's *English Malady:* "Do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness." Boswell omits several paragraphs of this letter dealing with the same topic (*Life of J.*, 3. 99). See also *ibid.*, 3. 478.

[5] Strongly suggestive of the *belle âme* celebrated by Rousseau, particularly in the *Nouvelle Héloïse.* See also Boswell's development of this favorite theme in other numbers of *The Hypochondriack;* the chief discussion of his attitude toward it will be found in *Hyp.* 37 n. 7.

happy. But the distemper indubitably operates, though in different degrees, upon every species or constitution, as fire produces its effects, though in different degrees, upon every species of matter, however much or however little of a combustible nature.

Fire having been mentioned in the way of comparison with Hypochondria in one particular, I shall carry on the allusion somewhat farther, and observe, that as no wise man remains in supine negligence when he sees a fire break out and threaten destruction to his house, neither should he allow Hypochondria to gather strength, but should exert himself with all possible speed and activity to crush it in its beginning. As the first smoke from burning rouses activity to extinguish it; such should be the consequence upon the first rise of gloomy vapour in the mind. There is not the least doubt that Hypochondria, as well as fire, may be checked, if diligence, sufficiently early and sufficiently vigorous, be used. Indeed, in some very particular instances, the smoke and the melancholy are of such force as at once to incapacitate. But when a man cannot overcome them by himself, he must call in the aid of firemen or friends. Cheerful companions, by playing their pleasantry upon the mind, will soon dissipate the dreary clouds. Sensible, however, of human imperfection, I must acknowledge that as there are fires in the universe which all the power of the human race cannot extinguish, so there are excessive degrees of melancholy, which defy all our endeavours to remedy them, and which can be cured only by divine interposition. But as we should be careful not to think with the sluggard, that, "there is a lion in the street;" we should equally guard against imagining that there is a volcano within us, a melancholy so dreadful that we can do nothing in opposition to it.[6] We should be particularly careful against resigning ourselves to the mental distemper, when it vents itself in immoral acts, which a notion of our being driven about as the Demoniacs were, makes us too ready to excuse, and to deaden the voice of conscience upbraiding our transgressions. The *Abbé Le Blanc*, in his Letters on the English Nation, when treating of Hypochondria or vapours,

[6] *Prov.*, 26. 13. The advice Boswell gives here is that given to him by Johnson; cf. *Life of J.*, 2. 485; 3. 99, 419; 4. 437.

makes a remark to this purpose with much justice. He says, that people too often ascribe to disease what is in reality vice.[7]

Hypochondria affects us in an infinite variety of ways; for, a disordered imagination teems with a boundless multiplicity of evils; and the disorders of the body which I believe always attend the direful disease, make such diversities of combination, that it is scarcely possible to specify all the sufferings of a Hypochondriack.

Mr. Green, in his poem entitled *The Spleen*, of which I have heard Mr. Robert Dodsley boast as a capital piece of the present age preserved in his collection,[8] has enumerated exceedingly well the effects of Hypochondria upon a mind of that light structure which his seems to have been. Like one who describes the stingings of thousands of insects but has not known the gnawings of a wolf, or other such fierce animal, he brings together with truth and vivacity the minute fretful pains which are generally suffered by Hypochondriacks; but he has not had mind enough to be capable of being afflicted by its more horrible torments. Yet it must be allowed that The Spleen is both an elegant and a most useful didactick poem, as it not only points out in a very lively manner the ordinary effects of the disease, but also suggests excellent methods of cure, so smartly, and at the same time so pleasingly, that the patients cannot fail to take them.

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[7] *Lettres d'un Français sur les Anglais* (1745) was a widely popular book, which brought much notice to its author, Jean-Bernard Le Blanc (1707–1781). He was patronized by Mme de Pompadour.

[8] *A Collection of Poems in six Volumes by several Hands* (1748), a popular anthology of fugitive verse (see *Hyp.* 2; *Life of J.*, 2. 535; 3. 44, 305, 318; 4. 27). Green's poem, which had been written in 1737, occurs in the first volume of the *Collection* (ed. 1758), p. 116. Boswell alludes to it again in a letter to Temple of 1758 (*Letters of B.*, 1. 2), in *Hyp.* 22, and in his first essay on *The Profession of a Player* (London Magazine, 39).

Robert Dodsley (1703–1764) left service as a footman upon the success of his early literary attempts, the best known of which is his *A Muse in Livery, or the Footman's Miscellany* (1732). Through his own acumen and the assistance of such friends as Alexander Pope, he became one of the most influential publishers of his day. He brought out the works of Dr. Johnson, Gray, Young, Akenside, Shenstone, and others, beside securing contributions from Lord Lyttelton, Lord Chesterfield, Horace Walpole, and Burke, for his various miscellanies. With all this success, he was not, according to Dr. Johnson, "unwilling that his original low condition should be recollected" (*Life of J.*, 2. 511).

Dr. Armſtrong in his Art of Preserving Health has thought more deeply upon the subject,

> ——— the dim-ey'd fiend,
> Sour Melancholy, night and day provokes
> Her own eternal wound. The sun grows pale;
> A mournful visionary light o'erspreads
> The cheerful face of nature: earth becomes
> A dreary desart, and heaven frowns above.
> Then various shapes of curſt illusion rise:
> Whate'er the wretched fears, creating fear
> Forms out of nothing; and with monſters teems
> Unknown in hell. The proſtrate soul beneath
> A load of huge imagination heaves;
> And all the horrors that the guilty feel,
> With anxious flutterings wake the guiltless breaſt.[9]

Such of my readers as have groaned under "a load of huge imagination," as I have done, will admire the expression very much.

More poetically still is *Hypochondria* described by Thomson in his Caſtle of Indolence,

> And moping here did Hypochondria sit,
> Mother of Spleen in robes of various dye,
> Who vexed was full oft with ugly fit,
> And some her frantic deem'd, and some her deem'd a wit.
> A lady proud she was of ancient blood,
> Yet oft her fear her pride made crouchen low,
> She felt or fancy'd in her fluttering mood,
> All the diseases that the spittles know,
> And sought all physic which the shops beſtow,
> And ſtill new leaches and new drugs would try,
> Her humour ever wavering to and fro,
> For sometimes she would laugh and sometimes cry,
> Then sudden waxed wroth, and all she knew not why.[10]

[9] Boswell quotes from memory; in the next to last line, *guilty feel* should be *murderer feels*.

[10] The first four lines quoted conclude stanza 75; the rest is the complete stanza 76, where in the fourth line *that* should be *which*.

Armstrong's description refers primarily to the mind, "the restless mind," which, he well says, " 'tis the great art of life to manage well." Thomson's refers primarily to the body, to that relaxation of the system which indolence produces, and of which Hypochondria is one of the wretched consequences. The struggle in the breast of a Hypochondriack between pride and fear, is finely imagined by Thomson; and it must be remarked that these two qualities are also introduced by Armstrong into his account of melancholy. For after the passage which I have quoted above, he says,

> Such phantoms *Pride* in solitary scenes,
> Or *Fear* on delicate self-love creates.

Perhaps there is a distinction between Melancholy and Hypochondria, the first gravely dismal as in Armstrong, the other fantastically wretched as in Thomson. In my opinion, however, they are only different shades of the same disease; for I know that what each of these poets has so strongly painted has been felt by the same person in the gradations of his continued distress.

Fielding, though famed for humour and practical knowledge of life in its most active scene, and its most convivial gaiety, must have himself felt the distress of Hypochondria, he describes it so well, blending its corporeal and mental ills.[11]

He makes Amelia's husband say of her, "these fatigues, added to the uneasiness of her mind, overpowered her weak spirits, and threw her into one of the worst disorders that can possibly attend a woman; a disorder very common among the ladies; and our physicians have not agreed upon its name; some call it the fever on the spirits, some a nervous fever, some the vapours, and some the hystericks." And when Miss Matthews breaks in, "O! say no more, I pity you; I pity you from my soul! A man had better be plagued with all the curses of Egypt than with a vapourish wife;" the captain feelingly and gravely checks her raillery, and calls Hypochondria a distemper, the horrors of which are scarce to be imagined. It is indeed a sort of complication of all diseases together, with almost madness added to them.

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[11] This opinion of Fielding is quite opposed to that which Johnson held of him; see *Life of J.*, 2. 55, 199–200; 3. 49 n. 5. Boswell never quotes Johnson's favorite, Richardson. The passage here quoted occurs in *Amelia*, 3. 7.

At the time when I first happened to read this passage I was very severely afflicted with Hypochondria; and I well remember that by comparing it with my immediate sufferings, I was struck with the justness of the representation. In my next paper I shall present my readers with some of my own particular observations of the effects of Hypochondria, which being the result of intense study of the dire disease forced upon me by sad experience, they will perhaps find[12] come more home to their bosoms, than the observations of superior writers.

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[12] *Find* was omitted in the original, and supplied by a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 6.

No. VI. March 1778.

[ON HYPOCHONDRIA—*Continued*]

Nam res plurimas pessumas cum advenit affert,
Quas si autumem omneis, nimis longus sermo sit.—PLAUT.[1]

The various numbers of its ills to tell,
To bulk excessive my discourse would swell.

NOTHING characterises a Hypochondriack more peculiarly than irresolution, or the want of power over his own mind.[2] What that power is by which the conscious spirit governs and directs the various mental faculties, is, it must be confessed, utterly inexplicable as long as our souls are enclosed in material frames. While a watch is shut up in its case, we cannot see how the operations of its curious machinery are carried on; and the operations of the mind may, I think, be very well assimilated to those of a watch, as that comparison probably suggests the justest conception of what we can only fancy. An eminent physician in Holland, entrusted at once with a medical chair in the university of Leyden, and with the health of the Prince of Orange, being asked what the soul was? paused, and then answered, "*C'est un ressort.* It is a spring."[3] As the main-spring actuates the wheels and other component parts of a watch, so the soul actuates the faculties of the mind; and as the main-spring of a watch may either be broken alltogether, or hurt in different degrees, we may justly talk from analogy in the same terms of the soul.

I am not unacquainted with the reasonings of materialists, that the whole man is composed of one substance. But whoever can really bring himself to believe, that the *consciousness of power* is an attribute of matter, is, I am pretty certain, not composed of the same substance that I am; for I have an immediate impression of

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[1] *Menaechmi*, 5. 2 . 8.

[2] Boswell complains constantly of this defect in himself; cf. *Hyp.* 26, 39, 63, 64 and notes.

[3] Hieronimus David Gaubius (1704-1780), professor at Leyden from 1734 to 1775, and physician to the young Willem V. He was so eminent in his profession that the Czarina of Russia tried to inveigle him into her service. See *Hyp.* 67 and *Life of J.*, 1. 76 for other fragments of Boswell's talks with this worthy man.

that proposition being as impossible to be believed, as that my eyes are shut when I feel they are wide open, and perceive by them a number and diversity of objects.[4] To reason or even fancy, concerning what we do not see, from what we have seen, is pleasing to the mind. And my similitude between a watch in its case, and the soul in its material frame, will, I persuade myself, be agreeable to all my readers, whose dispositions are mild, and who like better to be pleased with what they read, than to attack it. An antient philosopher indeed, full of real or pretended honesty, declared it to be his wish that there were a window in his breast, that every body might see the integrity and purity of his thoughts. It would truly be very pretty and amusing if our bodies were transparent, so that we could see one anothers sentiments and passions working as we see bees in a glass-hive.[5]

This metaphysical piece of speculation has been produced by my feeling myself strangely averse to enter upon the fulfilment of the promise which I made in my last, to present my readers

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[4] Boswell and Johnson both rejected the materialistic or "mechanical" explanation of life, which was being advanced with increasing frequency by the scientists of the eighteenth century. Cf. *Hebr.*, 133:

JOHNSON. "Moral evil is occasioned by free will, which implies choice between good and evil. With all the evil that there is, there is no man, but would rather be a free agent, than a mere machine without the evil; and what is best for each individual, must be best for the whole. If a man would rather be the machine, I cannot argue with him. He is a different being from me." BOSWELL. "A man, as a machine, may have agreeable sensations; for instance, he may have pleasure in musick." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, he cannot have pleasure in musick; at least no power of producing musick; for he who can produce musick may let it alone: he who can play upon a fiddle may break it: such a man is not a machine." This reasoning satisfied me.

See also *ibid.*, 38.

For Boswell's further opinions on mind and matter, see *Hyp.* 48, 63, 67, and notes; *Letters of B.*, 1. 206; 2. 306.

[5] Originally it was Momus, god of censure, who wished that a window had been made in the breast of the man made by Hephaestus—"So that when it was opened, his thoughts and designs, his truth or falsehood, might have been apparent" (Lucian, *Hermotimus*, 20). Cf. the comparable remarks by Johnson, who called his letters "the mirror of his breast" (*Letters of J.*, 2. 52), and Rousseau (*Nouv. Hél.*, 4. 6):

... j'ai toujours regardé comme le plus estimable des hommes ce Romain qui vouloit que sa maison fut construite de manière qu'on vit tout ce qui se faisoit.

Boswell drew his allusion from Sterne rather than from classic sources, I think. Both *Tristram Shandy* and *The Hypochondriack* interpret the window

with some of my own particular observations of the effects of Hypochondria. To do it however, and that *now*, in this very paper, I am resolved; whether I shall do it well or ill; for I believe that firmly to reject all pleas of temporary inability, is the best way to acquire that best of all habits—a promptitude in execution.

One would at first wonder how a man should have any difficulty to tell what he himself has suffered. But the sufferings of a Hypochondriack, like the troubled dreams of a person in a fever, do not settle themselves with any permanent regularity in the memory. And indeed let any one try to express the most severe pains which he has endured, at any distance of time after they have ceased, and he will find his language quite inadequate; so that he must use those strong indefinite phrases which do not particularly specify any thing, convey any distinct meaning, or excite any lively perception.

Hypochondria sometimes brings on such an extreme degree of languor, that the patient has a reluctance to every species of exertion. The uneasiness occasioned by this state, is owing to a vivacity of imagination, presenting, at the same time, ideas of activity; so that a comparison is made between what is, and what

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(which had to *be opened* in Lucian) as a modern window-pane of glass, and both develop from that interpretation a mild joke about the resulting likeness between a human being and a glassed bee-hive. Cf. *Tristram Shandy*, 1. 23:

If the fixture of Momus's glass in the human breast, according to the proposed emendation of that arch-critic, had taken place,—first, This very foolish consequence would certainly have followed,—That the very wisest and very gravest of us all, in one coin or other, must have paid window-money every day of our lives.

And, secondly, That had the said glass been there set up, nothing more would have been wanting, in order to have taken a man's character, but to have taken a chair and gone softly, as you would to a dioptrical bee-hive, and looked in,—viewed the soul stark naked;—observed all her motions,—her machinations;—traced all her maggots from their first engendering to their crawling forth;—watched her loose in her frisks, her gambols, her capricios; and after some notice of her more solemn deportment, consequent upon such frisks, etc.,—then taken your pen and ink and set down nothing but what you had seen, and could have sworn to:—But this is an advantage not to be had by the biographer in this planet—

The glass hive for observation of the habits of bees, was the result of experiments made by René Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur (1683–1757); it is probably his single-glass hive to which Sterne and Boswell refer. The hives arranged in sections, with many glass divisions, were better adapted to the purposes of study, but they were improvements of later date made by François Huber (b. 1750).

should be.[6] Languor, simply considered, is not uneasy; nor is any being unhappy by the privation of powers of which it has no notion. The snail nor the oyster is never dissatisfied for want of animation—but a being that has experienced activity is dejected in a quiescent state, after it has continued long enough to fill up the full measure of repose. To be therefore overpowered with languor, must make a man very unhappy; he is tantalized with a thousand ineffectual wishes which he cannot realize. For as Tantalus is fabled to have been tormented by the objects of his desire being ever in his near view, yet ever receding from his touch as he endeavoured to approach them, the languid Hypochondriack has the sad mortification of being disappointed of realising any wish, by the wretched defect of his own activity. While in that situation, time passes over him, only to be loaded with regrets. The important duties of life, the benevolent offices of friendship are neglected, though he is sensible that he shall upbraid himself for that neglect till he is glad to take shelter under the cover of disease.[7] I indeed know an instance of a man

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[6] Boswell complains of languor even in his youth; see *Letters of B.*, 1. 8, 18, 19, 23, 24, 101, 201; 2. 290, 303. See also *Life of J.*, 1. 56, 383; 2. 113; 4. 11; *Hebr.*, 182, 410, 426; *Boswelliana*, 218; and *Hyp.* 25, 37, 38, 39, and notes.

Cf. *The Spectator* (100) on indolence:

> Indolence is . . . . an intermediate state between pleasure and pain, and very much unbecoming our life after we are out of the nurse's arms. Such an aversion to labor creates a constant weariness, and one would think should make existence itself a burden. The indolent man . . . . makes that being which was rational merely vegetative.

[7] Cf. *Life of J.*, 2. 133, 161. The passage is an elaboration of ideas which Boswell had first expressed in a letter to Garrick, (*Letters of B.*, 1. 201):

> That I have not thanked you for [your letter] long ere now, is one of those strange facts for which it is so difficult to account, that I shall not attempt it. *The Idler* has strongly expressed many of the *vis inertiae* of the human mind. But it is hardly credible that a man should have the warmest regard for his friend, a constant desire to show it, and a keen ambition for a frequent epistolary intercourse with him, and yet should let months roll on without having resolution, or activity, or power, or whatever it be, to write a few lines. A man in such a situation is somewhat like Tantalus reversed.
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> He recedes, he knows not how, from what he loves, which is full as provoking as when what he loves recedes from him. That my complaint is not a peculiar fancy, but deep in human nature, I appeal to the authority of St. Paul, who, though he had not been exalted to the dignity of an apostle, would have stood high as a philosopher and orator, "What I would, that do I not!"

See also *ibid.*, 1. 8, 97, 100, 150, 161–62, 181, 191, 198, 223, 257; 2. 271, 299, 340, 352, 368, 391, 457. Temple shared his friend's defect (*ibid.*, 2. 389).

of excellent understanding, fine taste, and nobleness of heart, who though admired in social intercourse, and distinguished in the highest publick appearances, is subject occasionally to fits of languor; but he has a singular felicity of acquiescence in that state while it lasts, and although his friends are uneasy, he himself suffers no pain. He has, to be sure, an uncommon sweetness of disposition; and his rank and fortune place him above all dependance, while his friends depend upon him.—So a cloud over the sun darkens those who are cheered by his light and heat; but the planet himself remains serene in celestial elevation.—He reclines with a placid indolence, and philosophically exists without effort, smiling when his friends attempt to rouse him to activity, and telling them, "I am content to be as I am."[8] So rare an instance as this is very pleasing to contemplate: for every sufferer is relieved by fancying that it is possible for him to be equally easy. We must, however, consider what is the usual distress of languid Hypochondria; its effects would be incredible were we not certain of them from experience. To pay a visit, or write a letter to a friend, does not surely require much activity; yet such small exertions have appeared so laborious to a Hypochondriack, that he has delayed from hour to hour, till friendship has grown cold for want of having its heat continued, for which repeated renewals, however slight, are necessary; or perhaps, till death has carried his friend beyond the reach of any tokens of his kindness, and then the regrets which pained him in the course of his neglect are accumulated, and press upon his mind with a weight of sorrow.

To be happy so far as mortality and human imperfection will allow, is the wisest study of man.[9] I cannot agree that happiness

[8] This must be Bennet Langton, the scholar-dreamer who is rarely mentioned in the *Life of Johnson* without reference to his carelessness or indolence (*Life of J.*, 3. 56, 145, 361, 396). See also *Hyp.* 56. Boswell wrote to him on one occasion, "Now my dear Langton let me request to have your answer to my queries directly; for *one* of the articles will be in the press in a day or two. How *can* you be so indolent?" (*Letters of B.*, 2. 393.) Or possibly Dr. Armstrong is meant; cf. *Boswelliana*, 255, where Boswell says he is so lazy that "his soul cannot turn itself in its bed."

[9] Boswell repeats this belief throughout the essays; see *Hyp.* 9, 15, 19, 24, 25, 26, 30, 37, 41, 43, 48, 52. See also the Index of *Life of J.*, Happiness; in 3. 154 Johnson sums up his attitude in alluding to happiness as "the business

will fly from those who pursue it, and follow those who fly from it, like our shadows, as fame has been said to do.[10] For I take happiness to be a science fairly worth the seven, as *Pope* says of common sense,[11] and we know the French are of this opinion, for they have a very good phrase for the art of being happy, *savoir vivre*.[12] I would therefore counsel my fellow sufferers from Hypochondria to adopt, in the general direction of life, the advice of *Horace* to writers, that they should be careful to suit their undertakings to their powers.[13] He whom experience hath taught that he is unable to do many things, or carry on an extensive correspondence, should contract his sphere of business and connections, that he may have a better chance of doing well what he has to do, and may have less frequent uneasiness from reflecting on his failures. Perhaps there is no man whatever who does not find that he has entangled himself in superfluous cares, and who would have a much easier and happier life, could he have spirit enough to select as much only as he can accurately arrange and perfectly finish.[14] The affairs of most men are like a forest

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of a wise man." For Boswell's sad increasing certainty that happiness is impossible in this "progressive state of being," see *Hyp.* 39 n. 11.

[10] Cf. *Boswelliana*, 294:

Dr. Webster was rather late in coming to a dinner which I gave at Fortune's, 9th July, 1774. His apology was, that just as he was coming out a man arrived who had money to pay him, and he stayed to receive it. "You was right," said I, "for money is not like fame, that if you fly from it, it will pursue you as your shadow does."

[11] *Mor. Ess.*, 4. 43–44.

[12] This was not the common translation of the phrase; see *Memoirs of a Young Man of Fashion*, London Magazine, 47. 20—"these bloods of quality . . . . found no defects in Bellmont, but . . . . every requisite for the *scavoir vivre*—the knowledge of life—in their way." Boswell is referring to an entirely new (and sentimental) meaning given to the phrase by Rousseau:

S'il falloit dire avec précision ce qu'on fait dans cette maison pour être heureux, je croirois avoir bien répondu en disant: "On y sait vivre"; non dans le sens qu'on donne en France à ce mot, qui est d'avoir avec autrui certaines manières établies par la mode; mais de la vie de l'homme et pour laquelle il est né: de cette vie ... qui dure au delà d'elle-même et qu'on ne tient pas pour perdue au jour de la mort. (*Nouv. Hél.*, 5. 2.)

[13] *Ars Poet.*, 38.

[14] Another moral tid-bit from Rousseau, on the text "*Voyons notre foiblesse, et nous seron forts*":

... celui qui veut être sincèrement vertueux se sent assez chargé des devoirs de l'homme sans s'en imposer de nouveaux. Voilà, cher Saint-Preux, la véritable humilité du chrétien, c'est de

where the trees are too thick, and the ground is over-run with brush-wood. Let a man clear out a sufficient circuit that the ſtandards may be more vigorous, and that there may be abundant room around them. I would also recommend to those who are subject to fits of languor not to leave themselves to their own minds alone for occupation, but to engage in some profession which calls them to ſtated duties. We may observe that men of business who are afflicted with Hypochondria, however dilatory and negligent they may be in their private concerns, are yet able to go tolerably through with what is to be done in the way of their profession. They are some-how borne forward in the latter case by external circumſtances, as a foundered poſt-horse will keep up very well when harnessed to a chaise, though he falls at every other step when rode free.[15]

The uneasiness occasioned by languor is doubtless very great. But there is a worse ſtate of Hypochondria, when the mind is so tender and sore that every thing frets it. When a man is in that ſtate, he is not only harassed by the same pieces of business, which when in a sound ſtate afford rather an agreeable exercise to his faculties: but even the company of those whom he loves and values is a burthen to him, and affects him with irritation; unless

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trouver toujours sa tâche au-dessus de ses forces, bien loin d'avoir l'orgeuil de les doubler. (*Nouv. Hél.*, 6. 6. See also 1. 52; 5. 7.)

Boswell expresses this notion several times; see *Hyp.* 4 n. 15.

[15] These are the arguments used by Johnson to reconcile Boswell to his profession (*Life of J.*, 2. 24–25):

> The ſtudy of the law is . . . . copious and generous; . . . . I hope you will continue to pursue it vigorously and conſtantly. You gain, at leaſt, what is no small advantage, security from those troublesome and wearisome discontents, which are always obtruding themselves upon a mind vacant, unemployed, and undetermined. . . . .
>
> If, therefore, the profession you have chosen has some unexpected inconveniences, console yourself by reflecting that no profession is without them; and that all the importunities and perplexities of business are softness and luxury, compared with the incessant cravings of vacancy, and the unsatisfactory expedients of idleness.

The figure Boswell uses to make his idea vivid is the development of one in *Boswelliana*, 242 (a page which contains several on this topic):

> Boswell said that business itself helps a man on juſt as the chaise going down a hill helps on a horse which is in the shafts. "When," said he, "I think of the fatigue of the law I tremble. But when I have once got on the harnessing of a Process, away I go without difficulty. This is juſt: let a man never despond as to anything, let him be yok'd, and no fear."

See also *ibid.*, 218; *Life of J.*, 3. 200, 470, 474; *Letters of B.*, 1. 41, 49–50; *Hyp.* 40, 52, 57 and notes.

indeed he has the comfort of a friend who will oppose him in nothing, nay will not trouble him with conversation but just as he appears to wish, watching him with soft attention, and as much as possible preserving an unison with him.[16] In such a state, books, which have been well called silent friends, afford a kindly relief. Every man should then read what he likes best at the time. I have generally found the reading of lives do me most good, by withdrawing my attention from myself to others, and entertaining me in the most satisfactory manner with real incidents in the varied course of human existence. I look upon the *Biographia Britannica* with that kind of grateful regard with which one who has been recovered from painful indisposition by their medicinal springs beholds Bath, Bristol, or Tunbridge.[17]

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[16] Cf. *Letters of B.*, 1. 18 (Boswell to Temple, 1763):

For the want of your conversation and the want of one who could patiently bear mine is no small want. I can indeed get people enough who are fond of my conversation when I am chearfull and lively and can contribute to their mirth, but nobody but a sincere friend can listen to my complaints when oppreſt with melancholy. A true friend differs much from a companion. The latter loves some particular qualities which one has. The former loves the man himself, loves him when gay and loves him when dejected.

[17] *The Biographia Britannica*, which Walpole said should be called *Vindicatio Britannica*, because it was "a general panegyric upon everybody," was edited by Andrew Kippis, 1778–1793. See *Life of J.*, 3. 198 and notes. For the regard in which Johnson and Boswell held biographical accounts, especially for their beneficial effects on hypochondriacs, see *Life of J.*, 1. 492; *Hebr.*, 89, 290–91; *Letters of B.*, 1. 255; *Hyp.* 63, 67. The precise value of such works is indicated in the opening paragraphs of *Hyp.* 25, and in *Hyp.* 35 and notes.

It was perhaps this opinion on the usefulness of biography which produced Boswell's interest in collecting data and planning to write biographies of various people beside Dr. Johnson; see his projected works (*Hebr.*, 53, 103, and *Life of J.*, 2. 511), and his letters to and about John Wilkes and Sir Alexander Dick (*Letters of B.*, 1. 41, 58, 63 n. 1, 86, 111, 234; 2. 280).

No. VII. April 1778.

[ON CONSCIENCE]

Nullum theatrum virtuti conscientia magus est.—CICERO.

To a man of real virtue, the censure or applause of no theatre is more awful or more animating than that of his own conscience.

CICERO, upon whose mind the advancing rays of celestial philosophy beamed with a brightness very admirable in a Pagan period of time, before the Sun of Righteousness arose, and shone forth in full splendour upon the world, informs us, in his Tusculan Questions, of a very remarkable interview between Pompey and Posidonius, which does honour to both, and of which he had an account from Pompey himself.[1] In ancient times the eagerness to visit illustrious men was much greater than in the present state of the world; and although this may be explained by the consideration that books are now much more generally diffused than they were then, so that as the streams of knowledge are conveyed to us in aqueducts, we have not the same reason for approaching the fountains; yet I am inclined not to hold the explanation as quite sufficient, and to allow credit to antiquity for a more generous enthusiasm than the moderns can boast. When Pompey arrived at the habitation of Posidonius, he found him confined to bed in very great pain. He regretted that this affliction should prevent him from hearing the wisdom of one whom Cicero styles, probably after Pompey, *nobilissimum philosophum*, "a most exalted philosopher." Posidonius, with a gallant spirit of resolution and complaisance, very different from what we have been told of the feeble peevishness of modern celebrated geniuses, broke out into the following fine abrupt exclamation, *Tu vero potes. Nec committam ut dolor corporis efficiat ut frustra tantus vir ad me venerit.* "But you *can* hear me. Nor will I allow bodily sufferings to have the effect that so great a man should come to me in vain." He then delivers to the hero, not a regular discourse, but excellent sentences in support of virtue, introducing indeed the high spirit of Stoicism, but at the same time appearing conscious of its being rather too high, when he says,

[1] *The Spectator*, 312, uses the complete anecdote of Pompey and Posidonius also, accenting the stoic response, "But you *may* hear me."

Hoc igitur tibi propone amplitudinem et quasi quandam exaggerationem quam altissimam animi. "Propose then to yourself a certain amplitude, and, as it were, very elevated exaggeration of soul." And after very rationally admitting popular approbation to be something worthy of a wise man, he utters the noble sentiment which I have chosen for the motto of this paper, "That a virtuous man's own conscience is as great a theatre as he can have." The epitaph upon Sir Christopher Wren, in St. Paul's church, of which he was the architect, has been justly admired as sublime. "*Lector, si monumentum requiras circumspice.* "Reader, if you would see his monument, cast your eyes around you;"[2] so that the whole church is made his Mausoleum. In my opinion, there is a similar sublimity in this sentiment, by which a man, upon the ancient principle of τίμα σεαυτόν,[3] "reverence thyself," is taught to expand his mind into a grand theatre of self-observation.

The construction of the human mind is a mystery which there seems to be no probability will ever be known in this state of human existence. Of its operations we have many registers, as we have many meteorological journals. But of itself we know no more than of the original substance of the planets. He, "who spake as never man spake," saith of one well-known quality in the natural world, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."[4] The sound of the mind we hear; but what it

[2] Sir Christopher's remains were deposited in the crypt under the southernmost window of the cathedral of St. Paul's, beneath a marble slab bearing the words "Here lieth Christopher Wren, Kt., the builder of this Cathedral Church of S. Paul, etc., who dyed in the year of Our Lord MDCCXXIII, and of his age XCI." What Boswell alludes to is a tablet on the side of the window of the crypt:

Subtus conditur
Hujus ecclesiæ et urbis conditor
Ch. Wren
Qui vixit annos ultra nonaginta
Non sibi sed bono publico
Lector, si monumentum quæsis
Circumspice.

[3] Doubtless a recollection of the inscription on the temple at Delphi, γνῶθι σεαυτόν, which is quoted in *Hyp.* 66. The magazine text gave the phrase as τιμη σεαυτον, and was left uncorrected by Boswell.

[4] *John*, 3. 8 and 7. 46. In the second instance Boswell misquotes from memory, "but *knowest not* whence it cometh." He is perhaps influenced in using this

is we cannot tell. The music which it utters, its melody, its harmony, its discord, its variety of notes, have been written by Shakespeare with a wonderful degree of perfection, so as to be played by a Garrick;[5] and innumerable other instances will present themselves to every cultivated reader. We have even gamuts and treatises of the grounds of its music—witness a Locke and other metaphysicians. But the instrument is as much concealed from our intelligence, as the spheres of which the delightful music has been fancied by romantic imaginations. Models enough of this unknown instrument have been framed, as portraits have been drawn of personages whom the painters never saw; but such models being "fabrics of a vision," have faded away, and been succeeded by others as vain as images in the clouds, painted with light, melt into air, and are succeeded by other forms as fleeting.[6] How then can we represent, by a sensible image, the mind as a theatre to its own actings? Let us conceive a spacious saloon, in which our thoughts and passions exert themselves, and let its walls be encrusted with mirrour, for the purpose of reflection, in the same

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figure by remembering Voltaire's quotation of Thomson's line on the winds, in connection with memory (*Hyp.* 67).

[5] The inevitable eighteenth-century connection of Shakespeare with Garrick —the accent falling slightly upon Garrick! Boswell makes this emphasis clearer in his dedication of the Donaldson-Blair *Shakespeare* to Garrick (*Letters of B.*, 1. 185 n. 1)—

> I even question if ever [Shakespeare's] genius was sufficiently acknowledged by the general voice till you appeared.

See also *Hebr.*, 51–2. Dr. Johnson did not mention Garrick in the preface to his own *Shakespeare*, and was taken to task for it by Boswell twice (*Life of J.*, 2. 105–6; *Hebr.*, 277). In both instances Johnson defended himself by objecting that Garrick had *not* made Shakespeare better known, with the implication that a critic who could illustrate any one passage in any of the plays by "acuteness of disquisition, or sagacity of conjecture" could do more in that way than "a poor player, who frets and struts his hour upon the stage." Boswell adds a long, eager note in explanation of this attitude of Johnson, in *Hebr.*, 278.

[6] The quotation is taken from *The Tempest*, 4. 1. 151. The phrase is quoted again in *Hyp.* 67.

Boswell was always seeking explanation of the mysterious functions of the mind; he usually comes to the conclusion that it must not be employed beyond its powers, especially in "abstract speculation"—cf. *Hyp.* 1, 4, 6, 26, 37, 39, 40, 48, 63, 65, and notes; *Life of J.*, 1. 398; 2. 504; *Letters of B.*, 1. 14–15, 49 ff., 239.

manner that rooms in voluptuous oriental countries are said to be finished for the purpose of increasing sensual delight.

That a well-informed conscience should be the chief director of the actions of man, is most certainly true. I say, a well-informed conscience; for whatever pretty theories have been given us of the beauty of virtue—of the natural moral sense—of the sympathetic feeling of morality[7]—a writer of temporary fashionable fame in this age, hath, amidst much levity, and I am afraid much contaminating extravagance of effusion, had the merit of introducing a decent and clear piece of induction, in which by reasoning upon an eminent example in sacred history he hath shewn that conscience needs to be informed.[8] The pretty theories to which I have alluded, though they pretend to be systems of themselves, are only the flowers of fantastical engraftings upon the blessed plant of Revelation. For as Butler in his very able and candid Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion well observes, modern philosophers are forgetful for how much of their knowledge of good they have insensibly been indebted to their Christian education.

A Hypochondriack Preacher, would, I am sensible, be an anomalous character; for whatever part of his sermon should

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[7] See *Hyp.* 29, 46, for other instances of Boswell's impatience with the identification of the good with the "natural." Johnson always scouted the notion (*Hebr.* 99, 240, 244; *Life of J.*, 1. 513; 3. 307; 4. 243). Boswell is elsewhere willing to use the natural state to defend a position, however; see *Hyp.* 12, 24, 30, 36, and *Hebr.* 28.

[8] Boswell alludes to a passage in Sterne's sermon on Conscience, included in *Tristram Shandy* (2 . 17):

> When David surprised Saul sleeping in the cave, and cut off the skirt of his robe—we read his heart smote him for what he had done:—But in the matter of Uriah, where a faithful and gallant servant, whom he ought to have loved and honored, fell to make way for his lust,—where conscience had so much greater reason to take the alarm, his heart smote him not. A whole year had almost passed from the first commission of that crime, to the time Nathan was sent to reprove him; and we read not once of the least sorrow or compunction of heart which he testified, during all that time, for what he had done.
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> Thus conscience, this once able monitor,——placed on high as a judge within us, and intended by our Maker as a just and equitable one too,—by an unhappy train of causes and impediments, takes often such imperfect cognizance of what passes,——does its office so negligently,——sometimes so corruptly,——that it is not to be trusted alone; and therefore we find there is a necessity, an absolute necessity, of joining another principle with it, to aid, if not govern, its determinations.
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> So that if you would form a just judgment of what is of infinite importance to you not to be misled in,——namely, in what degree of real merit you stand either as an honest man, an useful citizen, a faithful subject to your king, or a good servant to your God,——call in religion and morality.

appear not quite intelligible, or at all unpleasant to his auditors, they might very fairly, though perhaps not very justly impute to the gloomy disease of his mind. I must therefore guard against too much seriousness at one time, least my readers should contract any degree of aversion to me as a dreary teacher, when my sincere wish is, and I pretend to nothing higher, only to be their companion and friend. As however a companion and friend may throw in an instructive remark, which will insinuate itself more readily, because no authority is assumed, which can provoke to resistance and exclusion, the Hypochondriack desires to be of any little advantage he can to his readers in that way. He wishes without affectation to accost them in the true spirit of those good primitive authors, who have prefaced their works with such phrases as these, "Gentle Reader, Worthy Reader, Christian Reader."

That the merited applause of mankind is highly valuable, and a great immediate incitement to act well, I certainly agree: and therefore to return to the image of the mind as a theatre, I would not have it close as an amphitheatre; but open to the inspection of the world. But we must consider that valuable as the applause of men is, it cannot come in competition with the approbation of our own conscience. Men may see with erroneous eyes, or with eyes prejudiced by vice. To our conscience therefore we must intimately appeal. Seneca in one of his epigrams has a very striking thought, of the exact interpretation, of which from Latin into English I am not quite sure; but believe I understand its meaning, *Vive tibi nam moriere tibi.* "Live to your own mind, for to your own mind you must die."[9] For Seneca I have a double reverence; both for his own worth, and because he was the heathen sage whom my grandfather constantly studied, and I do not imagine that a philosopher so serious, meant in this passage to inculcate that a man should live to please himself, for that other people will be of no help to him when he comes to die. Were this the meaning of the precept, Seneca has the most perfect disciples in the Almack school, and the other various genteel clubs in London.[10] In my apprehension he meant to impress his readers

[9] Rather, from the lines of a late Latin writer, anonymous, which are based on Seneca and also on Virgil, *Ecl.*, 2. 15; Ovid, *Met.*, 9. 579.

[10] Johnson's fondness for genial tavern meetings was shared by most of the men of his age, and almost every public dining place was headquarters for a

with a judicious and solemn reflection, that a man should live so as to be approved by himself; because for that he will most earnestly wish when he comes to die. In short that he should act as Lord Lyttelton beautifully describes Thomson to have written, so as that there was not "One line which dying he could wish to blot."[11] I am however very willing that the passage should also be taken in a less solemn sense, in which case it will be found very practically useful. For, if a man were always to have present to his mind, how little the companions of his festivity can do for him, or indeed would do for him, when he comes to die, or will care for him when he is dead, we should have much less of that weak, and often vicious compliance, by which men of gaiety do what is ridiculous and criminal, not only against their own knowledge, but against their own inclination. Were the grand idea of the theatre of conscience in its full extent, and with all its enjoyments to be constantly in our contemplation, we should not forfeit the higher approbation of ourselves, who are really judges for the paultry, inattentive, and transient plaudits of others.

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definite group—the Royal Society Club, founded for the convenience of the Fellows of the Royal Society on its day of meeting, the Cocoa-Tree Club of Jacobite sympathizers, the Kit-Kat Club under the wing of Jacob Tonson, half convivial, half literary, etc. (See *Life of J.*, Index under Clubs, and Timbs, *History of Clubs and Club Life*, London 1872.) The "genteel clubs" were usually devoted to gambling or expensive entertainments of various sorts, and named for the host at whose place they met; of these Arthur's, Boodle's, White's, and Almack's (later Brooke's) were famous.

Almack's was founded by a servant of the Duke of Hamilton, Macall or McCaul (the name of the club being, at the Duke's suggestion, an anagram of the proprietor's), in Pall Mall, 1764; it was famous for extravagant gambling. Boswell frequented it (*Boswelliana*, 224 and note). In 1778 it was transferred to a wine merchant and money-lender named Brooke, who moved it to St. James Street. Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Garrick, and Hume were among the early members. In 1765 Almack built a suite of assembly rooms in King's Street, where for a ten-guinea subscription a series of weekly balls was given for twelve weeks; these were managed by a stern committee of ladies of rank, who made admission very difficult. These affairs are not to be confused with the famous but questionable entertainments kept up in Soho Square by Mme Cornelys, the *amie* of Casanova.

[11] In the prologue to Thomson's *Coriolanus*, which was produced posthumously.

No. VIII. May 1778.

[ON LUXURY]

Animus imbutus malis artibus haud facile lubidinibus carebat; eo profusius omnibus modis quæstui atque sumptui deditus erat.—SALLUST.[1]

Their minds, habituated to dishonest arts, could not well be free from vicious appetites. They were therefore addicted with equal excess to gain and to profusion.

LUXURY has been a topick for censorious declamation and satire in all ages: but the universality of the censure is, to a reflecting mind, a sure proof that at least it has not been always just, since the most rigid foe to sensual felicity cannot seriously maintain that in all ages mankind have had too many gratifications. Every thing of which we can form an adequate opinion is considered by us comparatively with something else; and upon an attentive examination it will be found that those, who either from moroseness of temper, or an affectation of some kind of superiority, have found fault with the luxury of others; have not exercised their judgement to ascertain any standard of propriety by which to try them, but have railed merely because they saw them in possession of enjoyments, without which they might to be sure have lived, though not so agreeably.

It is related of two Scotch highlanders, who lay down to sleep all night upon a bleak heath, that one of them, finding himself not quite as he wished to be, rose up, and brought a stone from a little distance, which he placed under his head to serve as a pillow. His hardy companion, having observed this, upbraided his luxury: "What, said he, man! are you so effeminate that you cannot sleep without a stone under your head?[2]

This story may serve as a very good illustration of the ideas of comparative luxury in different states of society, according to the different degrees of refinement in the progress of civilization.

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[1] *Bellum Catil.*, 13.

[2] An anecdote from the *Boswelliana*, 238:

Two Scotch Highlanders were benighted, and lay down to sleep on the side of a mountain. After they had lain a little one of them got up, but soon returned again. The other asked him, "What's this, Donald? What have you been about?" Duncan [*sic*] replied, "I was only bringing a stane to put under my head." Donald [*sic*] started up and cried, "Hang your effeminacy, man! canna ye sleep without a stane aneath your head?"—MR. BURNET.

A modern English wit jocularly represents a Caledonian boasting the luxury of breeches.[3] But, without having recourse to the ridicule of exaggeration, we may easily enough find real examples, not less ludicrous, when set in opposition to modes of living, which are now so habitual by constant usage, that we cannot well conceive how people could be content to do without them. In the last age it was the common practice in the best families for all the company to eat milk, or pudding, or any other dish that is eat with a spoon, not by distributing the contents of the dish into small plates round the table, but by every person dipping his spoon into the large platter; and when the fashion of having a small plate for each guest was brought from the continent by a young gentleman returned from his travels, a good old inflexible neighbour in the country said, "he did not see any thing he had learnt, but to take his broth twice." Nay, in our own remembrance, the use of a carving knife was considered as a novelty; and a gentleman of ancient family and good literature used to rate his son, a friend of mine, for introducing such a foppish superfluity.[4]

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[3] This may have been John Wilkes, who loved jokes at the expense of the North Britons, especially in the presence of Boswell (cf. *Life of J.*, 3. 83, 88; 4. 117; *Hyp.* 47 n. 8). On one occasion, when Boswell complained that someone had stolen his handkerchief, Wilkes refused sympathy on the ground that the remark was merely the "ostentation of a Scotsman to let the world know he has a handkerchief" (Bleackley, *Life of John Wilkes*, 323).

[4] Cf. *Hyp.* 10. For the manners and menus of high Scottish families, see the accounts of their tour to the Hebrides by both Boswell and Johnson, and *Letters of J.* Apropos of carving, Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale (*Letters of J.*, 1. 272),

> Their meat being often newly killed is very tough, and as nothing is sufficiently subdued by the fire, is not easily to be eaten. Carving is here a vary laborious employment, for the knives are never whetted. Table-knives are not of long subsistence in the Highlands; every man, while arms were a regular part of dress, had his knife and fork appendant to his dirk. Knives they now lay upon the table, but the handles are apt to shew that they have been in other hands, and the blades have neither brightness nor edge.

Birkbeck Hill adds an interesting note from the *Autobiography* of Alexander Carlyle, to the effect that in 1742 the appearance of knives and forks upon the tavern table at Haddington, where the Presbytery dined, was regarded as a sign of increasing refinement. Boswell's record of Johnson's investigations on the subject adds several vivid horrors, not omitting the manners of the great Cham himself (*Hebr.*, 234–35):

> During our sail, Dr. Johnson asked about the use of the dirk, with which he imagined the Highlanders cut their meat. He was told, they had a knife and fork besides, to eat with. He asked, how did the women do? and was answered, some of them had a knife and fork

There is no doubt that there may be an excess of luxury by which the more solid properties of man will be weakened, if not annihilated. In observing individuals, we find that a keen gratification of appetites and taſtes, as it produces exquisite pleasure of an inferior and slight kind, which can be repeated with frequency, indisposes them for ſteady, noble enjoyment; and to borrow an admirable metaphor from Goldsmith, in his life of Nash, their minds shrink to the diminutive size of the objects with which they are occupied.[5] A mind so shrunk and shrivelled, as to take in only petty delights, is averse from those extensive satisfactions which are suited to the dignity of human nature, in that ſtate to which, amidſt all our imperfections, it can at times be raised.

Yet when luxury is so managed by prudence and spirit that it is kept in its proper subordination to more important objects, when it is made to serve only as a quickener to the life of indi-

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too; but in general the men, when they had cut their meat, handed their knives and forks to the women, and they themselves eat with their fingers. The old tutor of Macdonald always eat fish with his fingers, alledging that a knife and fork gave it a bad taſte. I took the liberty to observe to Dr. Johnson, that he did so. "Yes, (said he;) but it is because I am short-sighted, and afraid of bones, for which reason I am not fond of eating many kinds of fish, because I muſt use my fingers."

The letter from Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, cited above, also explains Boswell's allusion to "milk . . . . or any other dish that is eat with a spoon":

They retain so much of the paſtoral life, that some preparation of milk is commonly one of the dishes both at dinner and supper.

Buchanan, in his *Travels in the Western Hebrides 1782–1790* (publ. 1793) thus describes the meals of the common people (pp. 104, 105):

Their cakes are made of barley meal, and toaſted againſt a ſtone placed upright before a good fire; and sometimes, when either haſte or hunger impels them, they are laid on the ashes, with more ashes above, to bake them more quickly. The people eat twice a day. The first meal is called *deinnar* or breakfaſt, the laſt is their supper. They seldom break faſt, unless from some necessary haſte, before eleven o'clock; and the supper, when night drives them home from their labour, is placed before them.

. . . . . .

Potatoes and fish generally make up their firſt meal, and the whole family commonly eat out of one dish called the *claar*. This large dish is between three and four feet in length, and a foot and a half in breadth, made up of deal. They place the ſtraw or grass on the bottom, and pour out the potatoes and fish above that ſtratum, which they generally collect carefully, with the fragments, for some favourite cow. Their laſt meal is generally made up of *brochan*, (a kind of water gruel) boiled mutton, with bread and potatoes.

[5] Boswell exaggerates Goldsmith's remark: "The minds of the generality of mankind shrink with their circumſtances, and Nash, upon the immediate proſpect of poverty, was now mean enough . . . . to enter into a confederacy . . . . to evade the law [on gambling]." (*Misc. Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, Macmillan, 1893, p. 528.)

viduals, or a solace to them after labours and cares, there is no doubt that it is very beneficial even in a partial view: for in a general view we must all see that luxury is the great incitement to every thing great and elegant in society, to all our commerce, and to almost all our arts. Were men content with the bounties of nature, as some philosophers in love with simplicity have inculcated, the intercourse between the various distant nations that inhabit the globe would cease, the positive pleasures of variety would be lost, the most vigorous faculties would lie torpid, and instead of that enlargement of mind, which is the effect of extensive communications, we should all become as narrow in our notions as the inhabitants of the rudest country that has yet been discovered, ruder far than we can almost believe, who have from our infancy participated of travelled intelligence.[6] Helvetius, amongst many false positions and licentious reveries, observes, with much justice, that the education of man begins at his birth, and is carried on during the whole course of his life.[7] Let it then be considered how much more ignorant the grossest of our common people would be, were there not in the great school of the world, that quantity of information brought from other countries, which is every where disseminated. The lowest mechanick, though he may not have distinct and accurate science, has yet such a store of geography, of natural history, of mechanicks, and other parts of knowledge, that were his mind to be emptied of it, the wretched vacancy would amaze us.

It has always appeared to me, that there is an essential difference between different kinds of luxury, as to the perniciousness of its effects. The luxury of the table, by which the palate is irritated, and the digestive powers pushed to an extreme degree, must be hurtful to the corporeal machine, by using it too fast; and we

[6] These are opinions shared with Johnson. See *Life of J.*, Index, under Luxury, but especially 2. 113; 3. 64, 321, 331; *Letters of J.*, 2. 120. Against the philosophers "in love with simplicity" see *Hyp.* 4, 20 and notes, 40, 52, 57, 58. For Boswell's frequent use of the word *torpid*, see *Hyp.* 65 n. 5.

[7] Helvétius, Claude-Adrien (1715–1771), in his *De l'homme, de ses facultés intellectuelles et de son éducation*, chaps. 1, 2. Boswell makes a loose reference for the sake of his argument; it is not only from the moment of birth that Helvétius reckons (chap. 2):

C'est à l'instant même où l'enfant reçoit le mouvement et la vie qu'il reçoit ses premières instructions.

know that in general as it grows weak, the mind grows feeble.[8] The luxury of indolence, the fatal effects of which *improba Siren*,[9] have ever been acknowledged, and are described with no less truth than poetical imagery in Thomson's Castle of Indolence, is also destructive to happiness. But I cannot be of opinion that the luxury of magnificence and elegance in building, in planting, in dress and equipage, and in all the fine arts, ought to be at all discouraged; for I think that all these kinds of luxury promote diligence and activity, and lively enjoyment, without being at all hurtful.[10] Thinking as I do upon this subject, I cannot perceive the wisdom of those sumptuary laws as to dress, which prevailed in ancient States, and which are to be found in some modern republicks, such as Venice, Lucca, and Ferrara.[11] I remember, that when I was at Lucca, the strange regulation that the citizens of that State shall appear drest only in black, appeared to me to be an ill-judged as well as a very dull negative provision. Surely a society of human beings, who present to each other only a dusky uniformity, is not so happy as a society where invention is exerted, and taste displayed, in all the varieties of forms and colours

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[8] See *Hyp.* 4, in which Boswell makes comparable statements, and *Hyp.* 17, in which (on medical authority) he rejects them—with apparent relief. John Brown, in his *Estimate . . . . of the Times* (1757), arraigns "high soups and sauces" as among the worst luxuries contributing to the debility and cowardice of the English (pp. 37–8). Cf. *Life of J.*, 2. 250, 195, where Goldsmith and Sir Adam Fergusson attempt to uphold the argument against luxury as enfeebling, and *Hebr.*, 407, where the diminutiveness of Spaniards is attributed to luxury; Johnson demolishes all of these opinions.

[9] Horace, *Sat.*, 2. 3 . 14.

[10] Cf. Boswell's own remark (*Life of J.*, 2. 113): "There is a profit in pleasure, by its furnishing occupation to such numbers of mankind." He found hospitality and planting to be activities which made country life endurable as well (*Hyp.* 37, 38, 57, 58).

[11] A note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 9 directs, "dele *and Ferrara.*" See *Hyp.* 35 for other instances of laws on dress. Casanova gives an amusing instance of the severity of Italian sumptuary laws (*Memoirs*, Navarre edition, 2. 429):

> We reached Sorrento at nine, and went to the gardens of the Duke de Serra Capriola. He . . . . had been banished to his estate for a couple of months for having violated the sumptuary laws, by driving about in a too magnificent equipage.

Boswell was a visitor at Venice, and probably at these other Italian cities, in the latter part of 1765, just before his "very singular tour to the island of Corsica" (*Letters of B.*, 1. 84).

which are to be seen in splendid courts and brilliant assemblies. That paper of the Spectator, which gives a fine description of the dress of the ladies of London at the play-house one evening, when the Scornful Lady was acted, has dwelt upon my memory since first I read it with a very pleasing gaiety.[12] And will it be said that delicate, agreeable sensations, which are primarily owing to ingenuity and labour, should be checked? I know not how to account for it; but I have no doubt that dress has a great deal of influence upon the mind. Every one has felt himself more disposed to decorum and propriety and courtesy, and other good qualities, when genteelly dressed, than when in slovenly apparel. Perhaps there is a general propensity in our faculties to assimulate themselves to that circumstance about us, which is most perceptible of whatever sort it is, as matter takes up form from whatever mould is applied to it. It has certainly been remarked that the most gallant men have been fond of elegance of dress. Cæsar was at first censured for an excess of the *cura corporis;*[13] and a very brave modern general, Lord Mark Kerr, is celebrated equally for his determined courage and his fine clothes.[14]

I would make a wide distinction between active luxury and passive luxury; between enjoyment which is the effect of power of whatever species, and enjoyment which we receive by the mere motion of sense: and I am aware that luxury may frustrate its own ends by unrestrained eagerness. Sallust, after describing some of the most profligate and voluptuous effects of Roman luxury, shows us that enjoyment was prevented by impatience; *dormire prius quam somni cupido esset; non famem aut sitim; neque frigus, neque lassitudinem operiri; sed ea omnia luxu antecapere.*

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[12] *The Spectator*, 270. The play itself (by Beaumont and Fletcher, 1616) is criticized by Steele in *The Spectator*, 240.

[13] Suetonius, *Divus Julius*, 45. 2.

[14] One of the younger sons of the fourth Earl and first Marquis of Lothian. He became a Captain in the army in 1693, and was made General in 1743, after notable service at Almanza and Vigo and a short period as Governor of Guernsey; he was appointed Governor of Edinburgh Castle in 1745. His niece married the fifth Lord Cranstoun, and it was through this connection that he came to introduce the unfortunate parricide, Mary Blandy, to Captain Cranstoun, the instigator of her crime. He was also related to Lady Jane Douglas, whose cause Boswell described in his novel *Dorando*. Lord Mark died in 1752. Boswell has preserved several anecdotes of his gay recklessness in *Boswelliana*, 309, 311, 313.

"They went to bed before they had an inclination to sleep; they did not wait for hunger or thirſt, or cold, or weariness, but anticipated them by indulgence."[15] I cannot charge the fashionable world of this age with one of these counts, the charge of going to bed before they have an inclination to sleep, for indulgence in reſt cannot juſtly be imputed to them:[16] but I believe they know from fretful experience what is the effect of the other inſtances of anticipation.

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[15] *Bellum Catil.*, 13.

[16] Horace Walpole objected that the new fashion of late hours obliged him to reconstruct all his habits.

No. IX. June 1778.

[ON YOUTH & AGE]

ἄξετε δὲ Πριάμοιο βίην, ὄφρ' ὅρκια τάμνῃ
αὐτός, ἐπεί οἱ παῖδες ὑπερφίαλοι καὶ ἄπιστοι,
μή τις ὑπερβασίῃ Διὸς ὅρκια δηλήσηται.
αἰεὶ δ' ὁπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν φρένες ἠερέθονται·
οἷς δ' ὁ γέρων μετέῃσιν, ἅμα πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω
λεύσσει, ὅπως ὄχ' ἄριστα μετ' ἀμφοτέροισι γένηται.—HOMER.

Let Reverend Priam in the truce engage,
And add the sanction of considerate age:
His sons are faithless, headlong in debate,
And youth itself an empty wavering state.
Cool age advances venerably wise,
Turns on all hands its deep-discerning eyes;
Sees what befell and what may yet befall;
Concludes from both and best provides for all.—POPE.[1]

THE difference between youth and age, as it is one of the few things as to which mankind are universally agreed, is perhaps the most common subject both of conversation and of books. Yet I am not sure that moralists have made all the improvement of it by useful reflexions, that it is capable of producing in minds accustomed to extensive thought and comparison of ideas.

To write upon a common subject is considered by many to be the province of the dull and the ignorant. But let us give due attention to a very material difference. Dullness and ignorance indeed may repeat or transcribe what others have said or written on a common subject. But to present a common subject with the pleasing grace of novelty, by placing it in a point of view in which it has not been seen before, by starting unexpected notions concerning it, or even by giving it a fresh colouring, is to exhibit a proof of no ordinary genius.[2] An author therefore, who, conscious

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[1] *Iliad*, 3. 105 ff. The magazine text gave τάμνῃ for τάμνῃ; αὐτος for αὐτὸς; ὑπερβασίν for ὑπερβασίῃ; αἰεί δε for αἰεὶ δ'; ἠερεθόνται for ἠερέθονται; οἷς δὲ ὁ for οἷς δ' ὁ; μετέησιν for μετέῃσιν; γενήται for γένηται. Boswell made no corrections.

[2] Cf. *Life of J.*, 3. 342: "BOSWELL. . . . . Suppose a face has been painted by fifty painters before; still we love to see it done by Sir Joshua." See also the following:

of this, undertakes an essay upon a common subject, has more reason to make an apology for his presumption, than to assume the modest and humble air of one who makes no pretentions to superior talents.

In the very nature of things, in the constitution of man as ordered by Providence, there cannot but be a considerable difference between a progressive being at an earlier and later period. For if there were not a difference, there would in effect be no progression.[3] And truely in so far as respects the mind, we have instances of almost no progression at all, which makes us perceive the justice of Cicero's observation, that to be ignorant of what has passed in the world is to remain in childhood. Savages in general may be looked upon as children during the whole of their lives, on account of the very scanty share of knowledge which they possess. I remember very well that the *Esquimaux* who were in London some years ago appeared to me in that light.[4] The father and mother seemed to have their wonder and risibility

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The task of an author is, either to teach what is not known, or to recommend known truths by his manner of adorning them. (*The Rambler*, 3.)

The complaint therefore that all topicks are preoccupied, is nothing more than the murmur of ignorance or idleness, by which some discourage others and some themselves; the mutability of mankind will always furnish writers with new images, and the luxuriance of fancy may always embellish them with new decorations. (*The Adventurer*, 95.)

. . . . you are not to use those ancients as unlucky lads do their old fathers, and make no conscience of picking their pockets and pillaging them. Your business is not to steal from them, but to improve upon them, and make their sentiments your own; which is an effect of great judgment; and, though difficult, yet very possible, without the scurvy imputation of filching. (Swift, *Advice to a Young Poet.*)

Boswell is perhaps careful to explain his attitude as to common subjects because he is conscious that this essay very closely parallels certain numbers of *The Rambler* and *The Spectator*. See quotations below.

[3] This is part of Boswell's general belief in man's progression through discipline to ultimate good; cf. *Hyp.* 39 n. 10.

[4] This was the party brought to England from Labrador by Captain Cartwright in 1772. It consisted of the priest Attuiock; Ickcongoque, his youngest wife; Ickeuna, her daughter, a child under four years of age (whom Boswell calls Dickizuma); Tooklavinia, Attuiock's youngest brother; and Caubvick, wife to the last named. The savages caught the pest, and all died before reaching home except Caubvick, who had been seized with it first. (Cartwright, George, *A Journal of the Transactions and Events during a Residence of nearly sixteen Years on the Coast of Labrador*. 1792.) See my Introduction for the discussion of the eighteenth century's interest in "natural man" (pp. 84–87). For Boswell's response to the fad, see *ibid.*, pp. 91 ff.

excited by the same petty trifling objects which touched the fancy of *Dickizuma* their child. Nor did he, who was said to be a reverend priest upon the coast of Labrador, convince me that he was much wiser. The child was more playful than the grown people. But I imputed that to corporeal levity, as I did their sedateness to corporeal tranquillity; in short, there was much about the same diversity between them as between a kitten and an old cat. Captain Cooke, the celebrated circumnavigator, who is now for the fourth time surrounding the globe, and whose plain, candid, and judicious remarks I value very highly, gave me, in a conversation which I had with him at Sir John Pringle's table, the same account of the untutored nations in the Southern hemisphere.[5] He told me, that we were not to suppose them witty, because they laughed a great deal; for that they were amused with very small matters; and he also told me, that they were quite volatile and inattentive, and would ask a variety of questions in rapid succession, without waiting till they received answers. Such titillations of inquisitiveness, which could cease without being appeased by gratifications, indicate a mean state of mind, the reverse of that noble, ardent, persevering curiosity which is ever found in a vigorous, well-cultivated understanding.[6] Nor is the continuation of childhood by reason of ignorance peculiar to the savage life. For we find it in greater and lesser degrees in individuals of societies the most cultivated. "Sauntering Jack and idle Joan," whom Prior, by a choice collection of frivolous circumstances, represents as having "lived a kind of as it were," are

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[5] The meeting with Captain Cook at Sir John's took place on April 2, 1776; later, Boswell told Johnson that he had "catched the enthusiasm of curiosity and adventure, and felt a strong inclination to go with him on his next voyage." (*Life of J.*, 3. 8.) Cook had returned in 1775 from his successful second voyage, undertaken in 1772 to determine whether or not there was a great southern continent. In the course of it he had discovered New Caledonia and Norfolk Island, visited New Zealand, and made examination of the Marquesas and Tonga Islands.

Two months after the conversation with Boswell, he set out on "his next voyage," which was his last; he was killed at Kealakekua Bay in 1779.

[6] Cf. *Hyp.* 47, where Boswell admits that he is of an "inquisitive turn"; *Hyp.* 13 and 63, which record his visit to the mad-house through "curiosity"; *Letters of B.*, 1. 251; 2. 449—concerning his curiosity about Mrs. Rudd and camp life in Spain.

characters not at all so rare as one may suppose, without making an attentive close enquiry.[7]

No man perhaps has ever had a more lively perception of the varieties of human life than Horace, whose admirable faculties were highly improved by the best education, and by the acquaintance with every thing worth knowing, which he enjoyed with the most fortunate freedom. I take it for granted that none of my readers will dispute the authenticity of Horace's history, that he actually lived in the court of Augustus; though in an age where there is such an affectation of scepticism, I cannot be quite sure but there may be some followers of father Harduin, the jesuit, who very ingeniously wrote a dissertation to prove that the books which we call the classicks, never existed in ancient Rome, but were composed by Monks in a modern period of time.[8] Harduin's piece of classical infidelity may, I think, be esteemed as a very fair, ridiculous imitation of that kind of disbelief, which objects to the credibility of distant and extraordinary facts, though vouched by such evidence as we could reasonably expect to have. As an able member of the holy order to which he had devoted himself, he had frequent opportunities to combat irreligious doubts; and it may be supposed that his curious dissertation was meant to be gravely ironical. But I have gone after Harduin till I have lost sight of Horace, whose descriptions of youth and age came into my mind with the fine liveliness of recollection which attends the passages of that poet which we have got by heart. He in a just and striking manner contrasts the fervour and complacent

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[7] From *An Epitaph:*

> Interr'd beneath this marble stone
> Lie sauntering Jack and idle Joan,
> . . . . . .
> Nor good, nor bad, nor fools, nor wise;
> They would not learn, nor could advise;
> Without love, hatred, joy, or fear,
> They led—a kind of—as it were.

[8] Jean Hardouin, S.J. (1646–1729), during the greater part of his life the librarian at Collège Louis-le-Grand, claimed that the greatest part of the works and monuments of antiquity were in reality the efforts of monks of the Middle Ages, pointing out allusions to Christianity or to events in the Middle Ages which indicated recent origin for everything after Homer except the elder Pliny, Cicero, Virgil's *Georgics*, and Horace's *Epistles* and *Satires*. His notions are set forth chiefly in his *Chronologie expliquée par les médailles* (1693).

gaiety of youth with the coldness and fretful rigidity of age.[9] But Horace, thought a very good philosopher upon many occasions, has not given any precepts to the young and the old how to correct their several faults, and contribute to their mutual happiness.

Youth, however inferior to age in experience and wisdom, has no doubt the advantage in mere animal life; and for this reason many very fondly give it the preference, somewhat upon the principle of the common proverb, that "a living dog is better than a dead lion." But surely we are formed to enjoy a kind of happiness superior to that of mere animal life, and the pleasures of the senses. Intellectual felicity affords a much higher delight to those who are capable of relishing it. Of this I am sure from what I have felt myself, and I should not say so, had I not also felt very exquisitely the pleasures of sense.[10] I have heard that a late very old general officer in the British service, when somebody was talking to him of his high military preferments, said, that he would be content to be the lowest ensign in the army, on condition of being only sixteen years old. Such a saying, if it expressed the General's real meaning, only showed that his happiness was altogether sensual, and that in the course of a long life he had made no advance in the refinement and elevation of his nature.[11] How different from his animal enthusiasm is the generous, though extravagant wish which the excellent Fénelon puts into the mouth of Telemachus, whose admiration of virtue was so strong that he

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[9] *Ars Poet.*, 156 ff. The proverb on dog and lion occurs in *Eccl.*, 9. 4.

[10] See also *Hyp.* 15, 26, 40, 42, 46, 59; *Life of J.*, 1. 522; 2. 204—

> [Johnson] had resolved not to dine at all this day, I know not for what reason; and I was so unwilling to be deprived of his company, that I was content to submit to suffer a want, which was at first somewhat painful, but he soon made me forget it; and a man is always pleased with himself when he finds his intellectual inclinations predominate.

Boswell was thus pleased during his visit to Chester in 1779, because he was there "all mind" (*Letters of B.*, 2. 294).

[11] Cf. *The Spectator*, 153:

> Of all the impertinent wishes which we hear expressed . . . . there is not one more unworthy a gentleman or a man of liberal education, than that of wishing one's self younger. . . . . It is a certain sign of a foolish or dissolute mind if we want our youth again only for the strength of bones and sinews which we once were masters of.

See also Swift, *Thoughts on Various Subjects* (*Works*, 9. 223):

> No wise man ever wished to be younger.

lamented being obliged to pass thro' the fiery season of youth, during which there are so many temptations that may seduce to immorality. "How wretched a period of life, said I, is youth! Wherefore did the gods, who cruelly sport with the calamities of men, ordain them to pass through that state which is divided between the sports of folly and the agonies of desire? Why is not my head already hoary, and why do not my steps falter on the brink of the grave?"[12]

Young and old men are too apt to look upon themselves as quite different beings, and to live in a state of opposition, and even a sort of hostility to each other.[13] To increase good will is to add to the general stock of human happiness; and it is recommended to us by the highest authority to consider all men as our brethren.[14] I think that young men and old may by habitual efforts of reflection attain to a constant impression of this truth, that they are the same beings in age as in youth, with only the difference of circumstances attendant upon these several states of existence. Were a young man to have strongly before him the persuasion that he himself is to be old, and an old man to have strongly before him the remembrance that he himself was young, there would not be that antipathy between the two states which is too often to be found. The selfish principle would operate more extensively upon both. Youth would reverence age, and age would love youth; as a man thinks of himself with kindness, whether he looks forward to the calmness and drowsiness of his evening hours, or to his active and sprightly state in the morning. The transition from youth to age is so imperceptible, that the

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[12] *Télémaque*, 4 (Telemachus at Cypris).

[13] Cf. *Hyp.* 45, 46, for Boswell's hints of his own situation in this regard, and *The Spectator*, 153:

> There seems to be a most unnatural misunderstanding between those two stages of life. This unhappy want of commerce arises from the insolent arrogance . . . . in youth and the irrational despondence or self pity in age.

See also *ibid.*, 222, 263, 330, 336. In Johnson's notes for *The Rambler* there occurs the theme, "Youth to be taught the piety of age—age to retain the honour of youth." Boswell adds, "This, it will be observed, is the sketch of Number 196 of *The Rambler*."

[14] Probably an allusion to the various renderings of "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother"—*Mtth.*, 12. 49–50; 23. 8; 25. 40; *Mark*, 3. 34–35; *Luke*, 8. 21.

notion of our identity is never broken. It seems ſtrange then, that there ſhould be the idea of ſo wide a diſtinction between the two ſtates.

While I am writing this Eſſay, I find myſelf about middle age, computing life according to the calculation of the Royal Pſalmiſt.[15] From the point therefore where I now am, I can moſt impartially judge of youth and old age; and although I were to have any bias it muſt be reaſonably ſupposed to be rather in favour of that ſtate to which I am advancing, than that which I have left behind me. I muſt fairly acknowledge that in my opinion the diſagreement between young men and old is owing rather to the fault of the latter than of the former. Young men, though keen and impetuous, are uſually very well diſpoſed to receive the counſels of the old, if they are treated with gentleneſs, and as their minds are not as yet taught diſtruſt by repeated diſappointment, or fretted by painful incidents, they give large credit for wiſdom to thoſe who have lived longer than themſelves. But old men forget in a wonderful degree, their own feelings in the early part of life, are angry becauſe the young are not as ſedate in the ſeaſon of effervescence as they are, would have the fruit, when by the courſe of nature there ſhould be only the bloſſom, and complain becauſe another generation has not been able to aſcend the ſteep of prudence in the fourth part of the time which they themſelves have taken.[16]

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[15] The ſtereotyped "three ſcore years and ten" (*Pſalms*, 90. 10). Boſwell was thirty-eight when he wrote this eſſay.

[16] Doubtleſs a reference to the exigent Lord Auchinleck, Boſwell's father. He never underſtood his volatile ſon, whom he conſidered an improvident and irreſponſible dependent. See Introduction, I. 2; *Hyp.* 45 and notes; *Letters of B.* and *Life of J.*, *paſſim*.

No. X. July 1778.

[ON TRUTH]

Magnopere à vero longéque errasse videntur.—LUCRET.[1]
Sure men have wander'd very far from Truth.

MY SCHEME of writing a periodical paper, entitled *The Hypochondriack,* was formed a good many years ago, while I was travelling upon the continent; and in the eagerness of realising it, and seeing how it would do, I sat down one evening at Milan, and wrote The Hypochondriack, No. X. pleasing myself with the fancy that I was so far advanced, and with the enthusiasm which criticks ascribe to Epick Bards, "plunging at once into the middle of things."[2]

That Essay was haſtily composed in a gay flow of spirits thirteen years ago, and I shall present it to my readers as my tenth number, without making any variation whatever upon it. It is proper to observe, that I had not then resolved to receive no assiſtance from correspondents, so that the Essay contains firſt an introduction in a more sedate ſtyle, by The Hypochondriack himself, and then a lively epiſtle from a supposed correspondent, whom in imitation of other periodical authors in like cases, I have not scrupled to praise.[3]

TRUTH, which is of so essential consequence, and has been disputed about for so many ages, can never be clearly seen by imperfect beings. It is a moſt remarkable passage in the scripture where Pilate asks, What is Truth? and does not wait for an

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[1] *De Rerum Nat.*, I. 712. [2] Horace, *Ars Poet.*, 148.

[3] The essay was composed, if we may trust the evidence of Boswell's letters, at some time after January 10 and before March 2, 1765. His route was to be Turin, Milan, Venice, Naples, Rome, Florence, Bologna, Parma, Genoa, Marseilles (*Letters of B.*, I. 62); the last existing letter from Turin is dated January 10, and his Latin letter from Baiae, dated March 2, contains the line "*Heſterna noƈte Parthenopen hanc attigi.*" (Parthenope is the ancient name for Naples).

Boswell's remarks upon correspondents show how clearly he had his famous models in mind when he first began, and how he modified his ideas to suit his needs, when he took up *The Hypochondriack* again. Cf. *Hyp.* I, in which he rejects all possible communications.

answer.[4] I know many Divines, and amongst others the great Tillotson, have given different explanations of this.[5] The following Essay treats the subject in rather too ludicrous a manner, but as it is written with much vivacity, and a singular vein of wit, I shall not refuse it a place.

"ALTHOUGH I cannot pretend to the reputation of a very profound philosopher, yet I have always been actuated by a strong desire after Truth, and I believe have laboured as much to advance my knowledge as many men who wear graver faces than I do, yet I must confess that my progress has not been equal to my wishes. As I have, however, a good temper and lively fancy, I make the best of every thing. When fatigued with a long search after Truth, in which I have not found much,[6] I can amuse myself with curious speculations, or rather imaginations, as to its nature. Various have been the representations which mankind have given of Truth. In the Heathen mythology we are told, that Truth is the daughter of Time and Saturn. Some have represented Truth as soaring in the clouds above the reach of mortals; and some as lying snug at the bottom of a well, from whence all their efforts cannot bring her up. For my part, who love plain and simple comparisons, I look upon Truth as a pair of shoes. Let not hasty ridicule pronounce that this comparison limps, (*claudicat*) for I am able to show that it is perfectly just, and fully accounts for all that diversity of opinions which prevails over the face of the globe. I say Truth is exactly a pair of shoes. We come into the world bare-footed, that is to say, ignorant. The Savages continue to go thus, and have consequently stronger feet than civilized nations. M. Rousseau's notion of teaching nothing to his pupil

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[4] *John*, 18. 38.

[5] John Tillotson (1630–1694), the son of a Puritan clothier, was identified with the Presbyterian church until the Act of Uniformity was passed in 1662. His studies in the Scriptures and patristic writings combined with his natural bent to make him a tactful practical preacher, capable of holding his hearers. By 1672 he was Doctor of Divinity and Dean of Canterbury; by 1690 he was Dean of St. Paul's and Clerk of the Closet to William of Orange, with whom he had considerable influence. His endeavor to remedy certain abuses in the church, such as nonresidence at clerical livings, made him unpopular in some circles, but otherwise he was regarded so highly that his widow received more than two thousand guineas for his manuscript sermons. Some 250 of these were published, with his *Rule of Faith*, in 1704. Boswell probably knew the large edition of his works in three volumes (1752), with a biography by Thomas Birch. Boswell suggests him as a great stylist to Johnson (*Life of J.*, 3. 281).

[6] Cf. *Hyp.* 53 n. 2.

before a certain age, in order that his mind may ſtrengthen, is equivalent to the cuſtom of the country people, who allow their children to run for many years without ſhoes.[7] Now the great matter is to have mankind properly ſhod, or properly inſtructed. Truth is the ſhoe, but the ſhoe muſt fit, and therefore be proportioned to the foot. Carry along the metaphor, and it will appear that the Truth muſt be proportioned to the mind, and therefore if you will have your children rightly inſtructed, you muſt take the meaſure of their minds, a phraſe used by Mr. John Home, though in a different ſenſe.[8] The misfortune of ſociety is, that it would reduce minds to a certain ſtandard, and as if a general laſt ſhould be eſtabliſhed by public authority, ſet up a general rule of thinking. The public may reſtrain the actions of our feet, and punish us for kicking our neighbours, or trampling upon their property; but it is absurd

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[7] Part of Julie's educational scheme, in Rousseau's *Nouv. Hél.*, 5. 3; the passage begins with a contrast between the training of countryman and citizen, the point of both being final usefulness in their respective spheres:

> Ces maximes contredisent si peu, que la pratique en eſt la même pour le premier âge. N'inſtruisez point l'enfant du villageois, car il ne lui convient pas d'être inſtruit. N'inſtruisez pas l'enfant du citadin, car vous ne savez encore quelle inſtruction lui convient. En tout ètat de cause, laissez former le corps jusqu'a ce que la raison commence à poindre; alors c'eſt le moment de la cultiver.

The same idea, developed further, appears in *Émile*, 2 (ed. 1851, Paris, 98 ff.):

> Laissez longtemps agir la nature avant de vous mèler d'agir à sa place, de peur de contraier ses opérations. ... Vous êtes alarmé de le voir consumer ses premières années à ne rien faire! Comment! n'eſt-ce rien que d'être heureux, ... de sauter, jouer, courir toute la journée? ... Avant l'âge de raison l'enfant ne reçoit pas des idées, mais des images. ... Sans étudier dans les livres, l'espèce de mémoire que peut avoir un enfant ne reſte pas pour cela oisive; tout ce qu'il voit, tout ce qu'il entend le frappe, et il se'en souvient.

The *country people* in this essay, as in *Hyp.* 8, are Boswell's Scottish acquaintances and inferiors alike; cf. *Letters of J.* (Johnson's notes of the Hebridean tour to Mrs. Thrale):

> The maids at the inns run over the house barefoot, and children, not dressed in rags, go without shoes or ſtockings. Shoes are indeed not yet in universal use, they came late into this country. One of the professors told us . . . . that the country owed much of its present induſtry to Cromwell's soldiers. They taught us, said he, to raise cabbage and make shoes (1. 235).
>
> Raarsa himself is a man of no inelegant appearance, and of manners uncommonly refined . . . . The youngeſt boy, of four years old, runs barefoot, and wandered with us over the rocks to see a mill. I believe he would walk on that rough ground without shoes ten miles in a day (1. 257–58).

See also *ibid.*, 1. 240 and note; *Hebr.*, 61.

[8] Boswell is perhaps misquoting from memory a line of *Douglas* (4. 1 . 25):

> Men's minds are temper'd, like their swords, for war.

I can find no other expression remotely suggesting the idea, in Home's works. For Boswell's opinion of *Douglas* see *Hyp.* 65 n. 11; it is quoted again there and in *Hyp.* 59.

and tyrannical to make us all clap on shoes of the same size. According to my notion of the matter, Truth is so far from being a nonentity, that I see it all around me, every man fitted according to his measure. I grant that General Truth is a nonentity as much as a general pair of shoes A Sceptick therefore, who because he finds that Truths are not universally received, doubts of their existence, is just as foolish as a man who should try large shoes upon little feet, and little shoes upon large feet, and finding that they did not fit both should hold up his hands with philosophical agitation, and declare that upon this earth there is no such thing as shoes. It is true the Sceptick makes experiments on his own mind, and perceives that one Truth agrees with it at one time, and another at another time. Then he triumphs in having fairly got rid of Truth. But here he only shows his ignorance; for if our feet altered as our minds do, they would require different shoes. Let him attend to another part of his dress. When he is fat, and consequently has a large belly, his waistcoat is made large; when he becomes lean, and his paunch decreases, his waistcoat is made little. Now these two waistcoats are each very proper for the situation of the body when they are made, so are different Truths very proper for different situations of the same mind. A Dogmatist is a man who has got a pair of shoes that fit him exactly well, and therefore he thinks them so very good, that he flies in a passion against those who cannot wear them. He is so intoxicated with admiration of his shoes, that he forgets the diversity of feet, or, if he is put in mind of it, is for imitating the system of Procrustes, and by instruments of cruelty forcing feet to fit his darling shoes. The Savage, whom we have mentioned already, has no shoes, but good strong natural feet, with which he walks on perfectly well. The Freethinker has got a pair of genteel, easy shoes, which appear mighty agreeable, but it must be observed that they fit rather too loose upon him, and that by a small jerk he can, and does, throw them off upon occasion. The Sceptick pretends to say that the feet of mortals were never made for shoes; yet has he always one pair or other upon him. These are ridiculously down in the Heels, and seem to fret him. He can neither throw them clear off, nor can he get them firmly on. He is very restless. Lastly, there is the plain sensible Sage, who has looked about carefully, and provided himself with a pair of good sufficient shoes. With these he walks quietly[9] on, hoping that he shall one day get a pair of better."

It is curious to observe in this Essay, how an original allegory or metaphor, however remote in reality from the subject to which it is applied, may have the appearance of similarity or connection

[9] Originally printed *quiely*, and left uncorrected by Boswell.

in a numerous variety of particulars. There are some thoughts in it, however, that are agreeably just, especially the concluding[10] one which refers to the rational believer of a future state. It is with great satisfaction that I think of a valuable publication since this Essay was composed, I mean Dr. Beattie's book on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism.[11]

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[10] Originally *conducting;* corrected by Boswell's note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 11.

[11] The work which James Beattie (1735–1803), author of *The Minstrel*, and professor of philosophy, published as an attack upon the freethinking Hume in 1770. By 1772 it had gone into four editions at home, and been translated into French, Dutch, and German. Sir Joshua Reynolds painted a portrait of Beattie holding the *Essay* and gazing over a figure of Truth thrusting down three figures before him—two of whom Sir Joshua apparently did not object to having recognized as Hume and Voltaire. Beattie's work is now forgotten, even by Hume's biographers, though Dr. Johnson thought that it was "every day more liked," and felt that Beattie had confuted Hume completely (*Life of J.*, 2. 231; *Hebr.*, 311).

No. XI. Aug. 1778.

[ON LOVE]

Semper ut inducar blandos offers mihi vultus,
Post tamen es misero tristis et asper amor.—TIBULLUS.[1]

Love still invites me with a smiling eye,
Beneath his smiles what pains and anguish lie.—GRANGER.

IT IS curious to consider philosophically the nature and effects of that passion, which, while a man is under its influence, deprives him of all philosophy. This description may be thought applicable to every passion. Anger is justly said to be *furor brevis*, "a short frenzy;"[2] and grief has often been known to overpower the reasoning faculties, so as to remind us of a striking passage in the English translation of Voltaire's Tragedy of Mahomet against another foe of rationality.

"What a reasonless machine,
"Can *superstition* make the reasoner man!"[3]

But the passion which I purpose to make the subject of this essay, is the most universal, the most frequently felt of any. I mean the passion of *Love*, in the usual acceptation of the word; in short the ardent fondness which one has for a person of a different sex.

The Almighty Author of our being has created us with appetites necessary for its continuance in this state, and for the multiplication and renewal of our species. But the *desire* which is implanted in us for the enjoyment of sensual pleasure with the

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[1] *Eleg.* 1.6.1. *Inducar* was originally printed *inducas*, and left uncorrected by Boswell. The translator was Dr. James Grainger (1721?–1766), author of *Sugar Cane*—on which see *Life of J.*, 1. 557; 2. 519–20. Johnson praised his Tibullus (*ibid.*, 2. 520), which was begun during his service as army surgeon, and published 1759. Boswell probably misspells his name through confusing it with that of the Reverend James Granger, famous for his *Biographical History* (see *Letters of B.*, 1. 255).

[2] Horace, *Epist.*, 1. 2. 62.

[3] *Le Fanatisme ou Mahomet le Prophète* (1741), adapted (1744) for the English stage, in verse, by the Rev. J. Miller, rector of Upcerne, Dorset. The play was evidently popular; it was refashioned later by one Hoadly, and later still by Garrick (1776). Boswell quotes Act 5. 1. 3.

other sex, is no more a passion of the *mind* than hunger or thirſt is. It is true that the gratification of every appetite is agreeable, because it is at leaſt affording us relief from a painful craving by which we are ſtimulated, and is often attended with ſenſations of poſitive pleaſure; and conſequently being prevented from it gives us uneaſineſs in a greater or leſſer degree in proportion to the ſtrength of the appetite; ſo that in a ſecondary ſenſe the mind may be affected. But ſtill it is very plain, that the diſtreſs occaſioned by mere corporeal privation is very different from the diſtreſs of a lover, whoſe paſſion for his miſtreſs meets with no favourable return. The ſituation of Count Ugolino and his ſons, when ſtarving to death in a dungeon, which is ſo ſtrongly deſcribed in the original Italian, and which we have lately had excellently repreſented in England both in poetry and painting, in the former by the Earl of Carliſle, and in the latter by Sir Joſhua Reynolds, is a ſubject of very affecting horror.[4] But the ſeparation of Oroonoko and Imoinda, of St. Preux and Eloiſe, or any other ſcene of ſuch tender affliction, will touch the finer ſprings of feeling in the heart in a more exquiſite manner.[5]

Pope, who from the beſt information that I have been able to procure, was, to uſe his own words, "no philoſopher at all," but the diſciple of a noble pretender to philoſophy, whoſe words he ſet to the fineſt muſick, is pleaſed to give us a very indelicate notion of "gentle love and charms," repreſenting the amorous paſſion as nothing elſe but mere ſenſuality a little refined.[6] In

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[4] Dante's *Inferno*, Canto 33. The noble Earl's translation must have been incorporated in his *Poems* published in 1773—a pamphlet of 16 pages. They reached a third edition within a year, and even Johnson praised them (*Life of J.*, 4. 132).

Modern critics do not agree with Boswell upon the excellence of Sir Joshua's *Ugolino and his Children in the Dungeon*, which occupied much of his time in 1772–73. Leslie and Sir Walter Armstrong agree that it "leaves nothing to be desired except that it had never been painted." (Armstrong's *Reynolds*, 1905, pp. 97, 108, 178.)

[5] Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688) and Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1759); the heroine of Rousseau's novel was Julie d'Étange, called *Eloise* only by implication, through her love for her tutor, Saint-Preux.

[6] Pope does not, as one might gather from Boswell's remark, apply the criticism "no philosopher at all" to himself, but to the parrot (*Mor. Ess.*, 1. 4–8). The allusion to the "noble pretender to philosophy" is a hit at Pope's *Essay on*

my opinion the original impulse may be sensuality; but the after progress is quite different. The fire may be kindled by the heat of coarse materials; but the flame burns into a pure brightness. Sensuality is the fuel by which the imagination is heated; but it will retain the heat long after the extinction of the fuel.

Perhaps, indeed, there is an insensible combination of the qualities of body and spirit in the passion of love; for, if we carefully attend to the wishes of even the most romantic adorer, we shall find that he is never completely happy without the idea of being in contact with his mistress. And however he may talk in an elevated style that it is not a set of features or a complexion that he admires, yet the closest union of affections will not set his heart fully at rest, unless he folds his charmer in his arms. He cannot be sure that the jewel is his unless he has possession of the casket; and although many gay young fellows have sincerely adopted the lively licentious thought of Congreve,

> "I take her body, you her mind,
> "Which has the better bargain?"[7]

I know not if there has been found in any age a Platonist, grave, cool, and abstract enough to reverse the proposition, and content himself with the celestial part, without caring who should take the terrene. Anacharsis, the Scythian philosopher, when beaten in a mortar by the command of a tyrant, is reported to have said with astonishing firmness, "You beat only the shell of Anacharsis."[8] But

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Man, said to have been a mere versification of the Deistic theories of his friend Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke. Boswell speaks more strongly on the subject in the *Life of J.* (1. 311):

> On the 6th of March came out Lord Bolingbroke's works, published by Mr. David Mallet. The wild and pernicious ravings under the name of *Philosophy*, which were thus ushered into the world, gave great offence to all well-principled men.

For Johnson's opinion see *ibid.*, 1. 382.

The indelicate notion of love occurs in Pope's *Essay on Man*, 2. 189–90; Boswell blurs the word-arrangement in quoting:

> Lust, through some certain strainers well refin'd,
> Is gentle love, and charms all womankind.

[7] Last two lines of a song contributed by Congreve to Southerne's *The Maid's Last Prayer* (1693), Act 5; it was set to music by Purcell.

[8] Boswell is making an allusion from memory. The story is told by Montaigne in his essay *Of Drunkenness*, with proper reference to Anaxarchus,

I doubt if there ever has been a lover, philosopher enough to be content with the kernel without the shell; for whether it be founded in truth or not, it is certain we have all a persuasion not to be laid aside, that the body and mind are so intimately connected, that it is impossible to keep quite clear of the latter, if the former be much affected. Hence it was that Lucretia considered herself to be contaminated by the brutal violence of Tarquin, though her mind was filled with abhorrence of the deed; and, therefore, with the courage of a Roman matron, she killed herself.

The general desire of enjoyment of the other sex, like the general appetite for food, is, no doubt, as natural to the human species as to other animals. But the passion of Love, as we know it by experience to be modified, is quite a different thing. For it is an extreme and inexplicable attachment to one particular woman, to account for which, as I have characterised it as inexplicable, I need not be ashamed to acknowledge myself altogether at a loss. When the natural desire is thus modified, the analogy between it and hunger or thirst ceases. A man who is hungry or thirsty satisfies his appetite with any good sort of meat or drink that he can find; and even one who is very nice, or, as the French express it, *friant*, will be heartily glad of the plainest and coarsest food when his appetite is sharpened to keenness, which gives rise to the vulgar proverb, "Hunger is good sauce." In like manner a man, who is actuated only by sensual desire, will indulge it with any female whom he may meet; and like a glutton, who ravenously devours many dishes, will indiscriminately embrace a plurality of wenches; according to Captain Macheath's maxim, "I love the sex; and a man who loves money might as well be content with one guinea as I with one woman."[9] But a man who *is in love* feels himself fixed to one object which appears to his imagination to be peculiarly delightful; and as it absorbs all his fondness, he is quite indifferent about every other woman.

I am now speaking of a man who *is in love indeed;* for I know that there are numerous gradations of the passion, and that the

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who was thus killed by Nicocreon of Cyprus. Anacharsis is mentioned in the same essay, two pages earlier. It is a blunder rather than an evidence of complete ignorance on Boswell's part, however, since he places Anacharsis correctly as a Scythian philosopher, and Montaigne does not mention the fact.

[9] *Beggar's Opera*, 2. 3.

heart may sometimes be divided into many sections, though no doubt there is always a pre-eminent object, as in every seraglio there is a favourite sultana.[10] But as it is a maxim in politicks, "*Divide et impera*, divide and conquer," so I believe that when Love is shared amongst several objects, the passion is no where so strong but that a man has the command of it. Whereas I wish to direct my speculation to All-powerful Love, and to endeavour to raise curious conjectures, and perhaps salutary reflexions, upon the subject.

That the passion of Love is often suddenly formed I do not believe; for although I should acknowledge my faith in *sympathies* of which Sir Kenelm Digby has treated with an enchanting mysticism, and although I do seriously suppose that there are instances of persons who have corresponding qualities that produce instantaneous mutual attraction, I take these instances to be so very rare, that they are to be regarded only as extraordinary phœnomena in the infinite varieties of the universe.[11]

My notion of the formation of Love then is, that there is at first something in the person which pleases; and by *at first* I mean the point of time when the passion commences; for previous to that it frequently happens that the object of violent love is beheld

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[10] Cf. Montaigne, *Of Diversion* (Cotton's translation):

If your Passion of Love be too violent, disperse it, say they, and they say true; for I have oft try'd it with Advantage: break it into several Desires, of which let one be regent if you will over the rest; but, lest it should tyrannize and domineer over you, weaken and protract, in dividing and diverting it . . . . and look to't in time, lest it prove too troublesome to deal with, when it has once seiz'd you.

See other suggestions of this same essay occurring in *Hyp.* 15 and 51, and (in general terms) *Hyp.* 2.

Boswell emphasizes the same idea in a letter to his friend Temple (*Letters of B.*, 2. 447) dated 1793:

You have had experience of such *tender folly*, and after it was passed have been sensible how *weak* it was. I am at the same time aware that a *new instance* seems *stronger* than any former one; and therefore gives us trouble, unless we call in *Reason* to our relief. I, who have often been the victim of such feverishness, *know* that the best cure is *diversion*; and therefore if you find the complaint *obstinate*, remove from St. Gluvias for a time, and dissipate yourself in some place where you can have variety.

[11] See chapters 34, 38 of *The First Treatise Declaring the Nature and Operation of Bodies* (1644) by Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–1665), author, commissioned pirate, chancellor to Henrietta Maria, alchemist, and friend to Ben Jonson, Evelyn, and Descartes. He held that his own marriage was a result of astrological influences.

not only without any favourable emotion but with aversion. When the pleasing sensation is frequently reiterated, the imagination grows heated, and partly by habitually meditating on agreeable qualities really belonging to the person, partly by fancying others, the mind becomes so attached to that particular object that it cannot be separated from it without great pain; as branches of trees will grow so close together as not to be put asunder without tearing and destroying part of their substance. This similitude applies exactly where Love is reciprocal. But even when it is only upon one side it affords a very just image of what is suffered by a separation; and it may be remarked that the usual metaphorical expression upon such an occasion is "being *torn* away."

Love for a beautiful and worthy object can excite no wonder; because the mind entirely approves of it as fit and reasonable. But there is no doubt that the most violent passion may be felt for an object destitute of every agreeable and good quality; nay, not only shall this be the case when a man is under a temporary delusion, as love is feigned to be blind, but a man who is distractedly enamoured of such an object shall be fully sensible of this; and yet shall be unable to free himself from the power of the passion. There is a very good song in one of the collections of smaller pieces of poetry, in which a lover *analyzes his mistress*, if that phrase may be used, and after examining her title to different perfections one by one, and still being obliged to acknowledge her deficiency, he accounts for his preference by saying, in short "'Tis Celia all together."[12] Thus it is that I

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[12] William Whitehead's *The Je ne sais quoi*, which Boswell found in his copy of Dodsley's *Collection*, 2. 265:

Yes, I'm in love, I feel it now,
And Cælia has undone me;
And yet I'll swear I can't tell how
The pleasing plague stole on me.

'Tis not her face which love creates,
For there no graces revel;
'Tis not her shape, for there the fates
Have rather been uncivil.

'Tis not her air, for sure in that
There's nothing more than common;
And all her sense is only chat,
Like any other woman.

account for so strange a passion as that which I have just now mentioned. By habitual intercourse a general impression of a particular woman is formed in the imagination so as to excite pleasure; and it is in vain for reason to endeavour to get the better of it: for in many instances reason with all its strength cannot master the weaker but more subtile faculties of the mind. Thus when the imagination is once strongly impressed with the idea that ghosts[13] will more readily appear in darkness than in light, a thorough conviction of the groundlessness of the fancy will not prevent a certain degree of apprehension, as Mr. *Locke* has observed, when treating of the association of ideas.[14] I am indeed not quite clear that this is a just instance, because those who believe the appearance of ghosts upon the credit of testimony must also believe that darkness has ever been a concomitant circumstance in their appearance; so that it is reasonable to conclude that another appearance of the same kind will be attended with an usual circumstance. My readers however will be at no loss for instances where imagination bids defiance to reason.

It is one of the great arts of wisdom to govern, or, to speak more properly, to manage the imagination;[15] and as no disorder of the imagination has produced more evils than the passion of

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Her voice, her touch might give th' alarm—
'Twas both, perhaps, or neither;
In short, 'twas that provoking charm
Of Cælia altogether.

For Boswell's approval of Whitehead as a poet, and his disagreement with Johnson on the subject, see *Hyp.* 43, 59, and notes.

[13] Originally *efforts*; corrected by a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 12.

[14] In the *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690), 2. 33. The same passage struck the author of *The Spectator*, 110, who quotes,

Mr. Locke, in his chapter of the Association of Ideas, has very curious remarks to shew how, by the prejudice of education, one idea often introduces another in the nature of things. Among several instances of this kind, he produces the following: "The ideas of goblins and sprites have really no more to do with darkness than light: yet let a foolish maid inculcate these often on the mind of a child, and raise them there together, possibly he shall never be able to separate them again so long as he lives; but darkness shall ever after bring with it those frightful ideas, and they shall be so joined, that he can no more bear the one than the other."

[15] Cf. Boswell's approving quotation of Armstrong on the "great art" of managing the mind (*Hyp.* 5), and his insistence that "there *is* an 'art of Thinking'" (*Hyp.* 26 n. 10). Johnson agreed that "To have the management of the mind is a great art" (*Life of J.*, 2. 504).

Love,[16] it behooves us to guard ourselves with caution against its first appearance; for, as Thomson observes, it is too late when the heart is overwhelmed by a torrent of softness. That admirable poet's description of the feverish wretchedness of a violent lover should be frequently perused by all who feel that they have a propensity to amorous inflammation.[17] It has been well said, "Choose the best way of life; and custom will make it easy."[18] Upon this principle of the influence of repeated impressions of the same object, let my readers calmly consider the consequences of being in love with any particular person before they allow their minds to catch fire, by which means they will avoid the torments of criminal or improper attachments. But, if they have unwarily cherished the spark[19] till the fire is too powerful, let them fly from the cause of their sorrow, and sooner or later the fire which is not fed will die away; unless indeed, which has sometimes

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[16] Boswell speaks from experience. In 1758 he scorned "hot-brained romantick lovers" (he was then eighteen!), but in 1767 he wrote to Temple, "Love is a perfect fever of the mind," (*Letters of B.*, 1. 2–3, 135), and in 1768, of the little dark widow, "I love her so much that I am in a kind of fever. This is unworthy of Paoli's friend" (*ibid.*, 1. 169). In 1776 he said to Johnson, "I don't know but there is upon the whole more misery than happiness produced by that passion" (*Life of J.*, 2. 540). It may have been Johnson's steady answer, "I don't think so, Sir," which induced Boswell to think of the subject "philosophically."

In the year following the date of this essay Boswell sent to the St. James Chronicle an account of his sensations at the trial of Hackman, murderer of Miss Ray:

> I am just come from attending the trial and condemnation of the unfortunate Mr. Hackman, and must own that I feel an unusual depression of spirits, joined with the pause which so solemn a warning of the dreadful effects that the passion of love must give all of us who have lively sensations and warm tempers. His case is one of the most remarkable that ever occurred in the history of human nature, but it is by no means unnatural. The principle of it is very philosophically displayed, and illustrated in The Hypochondriack, in a periodical paper peculiarly adapted to the people of England. (Fitzgerald, *Life of James Boswell*, 1. 219.)

[17] *The Seasons* (*Spring*):

> And let th' aspiring youth beware of love,
> Of the smooth glance beware; for 'tis too late
> When on his heart the torrent softness pours.

The feverish lover occupies more than a hundred lines following these.

[18] A saying attributed to Pythagoras. It is quoted in Latin in *The Spectator*, 447.

[19] Originally *spasm*; correction made in a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 12.

happened, its force be such as to ravage the mind itself. Tibullus, in the lines which I have prefixed to this paper, has very poetically represented the pleasing approach, but terrible influence of the passion of love when it has attained full possession. His translator *Granger*, though he has imitated the lines beautifully, has not given the antithesis in the original between *Vultus* and *post*. But in one of the learned notes with which his book is enriched, he observes that the description probably alludes to the masks worn by Love on the ſtage, viz. an infant's face, with the head and claws of a lion behind. Though in danger from the lion we may get into safety by flight. But horrible is his situation whom the lion holds in his claws till he has mangled him irrecoverably.

No. XII. Sept. 1778.

[ON LOVE—*Continued*]

ἁ βάρβιτος δὲ χορδαῖς
Ἔρωτα μοῦνον ἠχεῖ.—ANACREON.

The strings will sound of nought but Love.—COWLEY.[1]

IN MY last number I endeavoured to consider the passion of Love *philosophically*, by which term I would be understood to consider it with that degree of illustration and wisdom, which I am capable of doing, when in a calm and clear state of mind. I have observed, that there is no word of more various meaning in modern writings than *philosophy;* and I am sorry to say that its most general signification, in the present age, is plausible reasoning against established belief. This *vain deceit* I wish to avoid; and I confess I have more satisfaction in acquiescing in experience, than in attempting to loosen every thing into uncomfortable doubt and fluctuation.[2]

I shall in this number continue the same subject, which I can do with the more ease both to myself and to my readers, that[3] I do not impose upon myself the talk of regular system or exact order; but just throw out what thoughts occur to me, as if I were sitting with a friend.

It is truely wonderful that Love has given occasion to such an infinite multiplicity of exertions of genius as we find in all languages concerning it. The rude songs of the wildest savages are in a great proportion produced by the amorous passion in its different states of hope, suspicion, disappointment, and other

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[1] Not from the fragments of Anacreon, but from clever imitations long accepted as authentic, and distinguished as *Anacreontea*. The translations by Abraham Cowley (1656), which he called *Anacreontiques*, led to the cultivation of short familiar verse on love or wine under that name, and in Cowley's four-stress meter. The magazine text gave Ἡ for ἁ; βαρβιτος for βάρβιτος; δε for δὲ; χορδαις for χορδαῖς; μουνον for μοῦνον; ηχεῖ for ἠχεῖ; Boswell made no corrections.

[2] Boswell's distaste for the philosophies of his day may be seen also in *Hyp.* 3, 11, 50. For his dependence on experience rather than theory, cf. *Hyp.* 26 n. 11.

[3] In the original, *as* preceded *that;* the correction was made in a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 13.

modifications, which are felt in all states of society; and we all know what a profusion of writings, both in prose and verse, civilized nations have poured forth, all having Love as their capital object. What novels, what memoirs, what plays, what poems have we, upon the sole foundation of an attachment between the sexes! To be sure when we take a close view of what is *essential* in the subject of any literary composition, we find that it may be comprised within very narrow bounds. For instance, let us think of the history of a war. All that is essential in that, is, that two nations had a quarrel which of them should have a certain tract of country, or certain rights either by sea or land; that in order to decide the difference, they mustered their forces, and for a certain space of time continued in a state of hostility, watching the best opportunities of fighting; that such a number of battles were fought, which were gained all by one of the nations, or some by one of the nations and some by the other, till at last there was such an evident superiority on one side, that the other was glad to obtain a peace upon certain conditions. Thus we see that the important public facts, of the longest war that ever was carried on, might be recorded on a few pages; yet what volumes may be filled with the relation of a war, when the various events of its progress are traced; the characters of the principal persons concerned in conducting and carrying it on are drawn; reflections upon human sagacity and passion as exemplified in actual incidents, are deliberately made, and compared with other incidents similar to them, to be found in other histories.

In like manner, how soon may we finish the tale of any two lovers, if we insert nothing but what is essential; for how very few lines does it require to mention that a youth was fond of a maid; that he exerted all his powers of pleasing to gain her affections; that either she listened to him with reciprocal fondness, and consented to pass her life with him in the completest union; or that she treated him with disgust or disdain, and married another whom she liked a great deal better. Yet how easily is the history of a tender passion extended to a considerable length, by describing the diversity of feelings consequent upon the successful or unsuccessful gradations which naturally occur.

That the feelings of lovers are generally exaggerated in the descriptions which are given of them, there can be no doubt; for

if all that is said to be felt by lovers were really true, the world would be one great Bedlam, and the rational business of life would long ago have ceased for want of reason and attention sufficient to carry it on. The plain matter of fact is, that some minds, of an extreme warmth of imagination, and an exquisite sensibility, have been affected in an extraordinary manner, which they have expressed with perhaps some additional force beyond what was actually felt; and from them a sort of fashion in love has been adopted, so that others, who did not feel the tenth part so much, have thought it necessary to represent themselves as undergoing every species of anguish which they suppose has been experienced by illustrious prototypes of Love.[4]

It is peculiar to the passion of Love, that it supports with an exemption from disgrace, those weaknesses in a man which upon any other occasion would render him utterly contemptible. Independency is a truely dignified state, and in proportion as a man recedes from it, he sinks into meanness. He who subjects himself to a servile compliance with the will of another from interested views of obtaining the greatest advantages is justly despised by men of spirit as an abject being. Nay, he who gives himself up to excessive grief, and vents his vexation in sighs and tears, because he has failed in obtaining those advantages, is contemned without even any mixture of sympathetick pity. But a lover is not ashamed to profess himself the most dependent creature that can be imagined, upon the favour of his fair one, to whom he gives the title of his *mistress*. He glories in wearing her *chains*. He is proud to be her *slave*. He pours out his tender *distress* in *sighs*. He bursts into *tears*, which spring from his *broken heart;* and if she is *cruel* to him, that is to say, will not *love* him, or allow him the possession of her *sweet person*, he renounces felicity. He is in

[4] Cf. *Boswelliana*, 231:

Boswell said that young people are often tempted to resign themselves to a warm fancy or a strong benevolent passion, because they have read that those who are thus agitated are nobler beings, and enjoy a felicity superior to that of sedate rational men. But let them consider that all these fine things have been said by the hot-brained people themselves, and that one who is drunk may and does boast as much his intoxicated situation. The impartial method of judging what state of mind is happiest is to hear the voice of the majority of sensible men, most of whom, either when young or when drunk, have felt the enticing delirium. . . . .

See also *The Spectator*, 40, 99, 377, on literary exaggerations of love, and *Hyp.* 13 n. 2.

despair. He abandons himself to every kind of effeminate dejection; yet, for all this, he is not despicable either in his own opinion, or in that of the greatest part of mankind.[5]

To quote authorities to prove that this is a true state of the dispensing power which universal consent has permitted to Love would be superfluous; since the whole strain of amorous compositions takes it for granted. I will, however, insert one quotation from a popular theatrical entertainment, *The Jovial Crew;* or, *The Merry Beggars,* which was originally written, I believe, by Broome and Crown, and after lying long dormant, was revived by the late Mr. Rich, at Covent-Garden, with great applause.[6] Two young ladies in the country, take it into their heads for a frolick

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[5] Cf. the remarks on *Othello* in *Hyp.* 29. An interesting commentary on this passage is the picture of the honorable lover in *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (chapter on *Friendship, Love, and Marriage*), by Dr. John Gregory of Edinburgh (1774):

> A man of delicacy often betrays his passion by his too great anxiety to conceal it, especially if he has little hopes of success. True love, in all its stages, seeks concealment, and never expects success; it renders a man not only respectful, but timid to the highest degree in his behaviour to the woman he loves. . . . . Like a person conscious of guilt, he is jealous that every eye observes him; and, to avoid this, he shuns all the observances of common gallantry.
>
> His heart and his character will be improved in every respect by his attachment. His manners will become more gentle, and his conversation more agreeable; but diffidence and embarrassment will always make him appear to disadvantage in the company of his mistress. If the fascination continue long, it will totally depress his spirit, and extinguish every active, vigorous, and manly principle of his mind. You will find this subject beautifully and pathetically painted in Thomson's Spring.

Boswell knew this book and the author; see *Letters of B.*, 1. 103, 200. See also *The Spectator,* 261.

[6] This work was originally written as a play by Richard Brome or Broome (d. 1652), the servant of Ben Jonson, and later collaborator with Jonson's son; it was first acted in 1641. After the Restoration it was revived, and in 1731 made into an "opera" by the addition of songs by Roome, Concanen, and Sir William Yonge. I find no mention anywhere of Crowne in connection with it, although he was a dramatist and a favorite of Charles II, and might thus have been busied with it before the eighteenth century. The *Biographia Dramatica* says of the work in opera form, "It was revived at Covent Garden, where it took a very successful run for several nights together, and afterwards brought many crowded houses as well there as in succeeding seasons. . . . . It is far from an unentertaining piece, especially to those who are fond of the musical drama; yet it is mingled with so many absurdities and indelicacies, that the great approbation it met with cannot but be looked upon as a kind of reflection on the public taste." The piece was performed as late as 1791, and the 1760 edition of the opera is extant.

to turn beggars for a little, and insist that their lovers shall accompany them. The gentlemen are not a little surprised; but finding them determined in their purpose, they give begging a very pretty turn in several allusions to themselves.

"Beggars! are we not so already?"

Tune, the Spinning Wheel.

We beg, but in a higher strain
Than sordid slaves, who beg for gain.
No paltry gold nor gems we want;
We beg—what you alone can grant.
No lofty titles, no renown,
But something greater than a crown
We beg not wealth or liberty——
We beg your humble slaves to be.

We beg your snowy hands to kiss,
Or lips, if you'd vouchsafe the bliss.
And if our faithful vows can move
(What Gods might envy us!) your love;
The boon we beg if you deny,
Our fate's decreed, we pine and die,
For life we beg, for life implore——
The poorest wretch can beg no more.

This delicate and earnest submission to two charming young ladies is exceedingly beautiful, and I own has always pleased me as much as any love-address that I have ever read. But setting aside that peculiar privilege which Love has obtained, how unmanly is the conduct of the two gentlemen, who ought certainly to be looked upon as a couple of pitiful fellows![7] Undoubtedly had any thing else but the favour of the ladies been the object of their anxiety, they must have appeared to us in a very unfavourable light. Some nice spirits amongst us were offended even at the metaphorical expression in the late letter of a gallant, though

[7] Boswell had read the *Lettre à D'Alembert* of Rousseau (see his essay, *The Profession of a Player*, London Magazine, 39. 514), and possibly felt support for the comments he makes in this essay, in Rousseau's assertion that the *Bérénice* of Racine "disgusts us with the idea of the benefactor and delight of mankind, converted into a whining and despicable lover."

For the air to which the song is set, see Chappell, *Music of the Olden Time*, 2. 654.

unfortunate general officer, who "threw himself at his majesty's feet for actual employment." Yet how much nobler an object is it to obtain the command of an army than the most delicious kindness of any beauty!

This singular exception from the usual effects of the degradation of man from the firmness which is the boast of his sex, is not natural; for we find in the state of society most approaching to nature, that is to say, in the savage state, that the male maintains an unremitting superiority over the female sex.[8] Its origin, therefore, must be referred to that strange system of manners called *Chivalry*, the offspring of wild Gothick imagination, and of which the amazing prevalence must ever be held as one of the most astonishing facts in the history of human nature.[9] By that system, Love was fancifully made a species of *devotion*, and the woman who was the object of it, a *divinity*. The utmost prostration, therefore, was understood to have nothing more of meanness in it than the profound humility of *religious adoration*. And now, though the system be worn away in the progress of time, a certain degree of its delusion and mode of expression remains, as we find the Heathen Gods and Goddesses introduced into our poems, though we have no belief in the Grecian or Roman Mythology.

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[8] Cf. Johnson's opinion (*Life of J.*, 3. 61):

Where there is no education, as in savage countries, men will have the upper hand of women. Bodily strength, no doubt, contributes to this; but it would be so, exclusive of that; for it is mind that always governs. When it comes to dry understanding, man has the better.

[9] Cf. *Hyp.* 52, where Boswell makes further adverse criticism of medieval literature and manners. Elsewhere he prides himself on his status as a feudal lord; see *Hyp.* 19, 36, 38.

No. XIII. Oct. 1778.

[ON LOVE—*Concluded*]

Durius in terris nihil est quod vivat amante;
Nec, modo si sapias, quod minus esse velis.—PROPERTIUS.[1]

Of all the woes on human kind that wait,
None is more direful than the Lover's state.
Or rack'd with anguish, or with pleasure cloy'd,
He sure is wisest who can best avoid.

WERE there nothing worse in the effects of Love than that humiliation of which I have treated, it could not justly be reckoned one of the chief causes of human calamity. The dignity of man is an enobling thought; but to have that dignity lessened, is not, positively speaking, an exquisite evil. And when we take under our view, that the humiliation of a lover is not debased by being reckoned mean and disgraceful, the most submissive admirer is not an object of such pity as we feel for the distressed.

But, whoever has experienced the passion of love in a strong degree, will acknowledge that he has felt sensations infinitely worse than mere humiliation, even though pride has struggled against it. For, Love immediately or consequentially affects the mind with every painful feeling of which it is susceptible.

As there is a degree of heat which produces only an agreeable warmth, and approaches not in its effects to the torments of burning, so we all know that there is a degree of Love so gentle as to be truely pleasing, and far distant from the excruciating gloom of violent passion. This species of Love we must allow to be the most general, and it is this which is meant in the greatest number of pretty little songs, and pieces of pastoral poetry, and is represented emblematically by doves billing and cooing, Cupids with festoons of flowers, and many other gay devices.

This, however, when compared with the passion of Love in its full force, is like infancy compared with manhood, or shrubbery with the oak; and indeed this last comparison has been often very properly made, to console those of humble stations in life with the blessing of security, by reminding them that the lowly

[1] *Eleg.*, 2. 17 . 9–10.

shrub remains in safety, while the oak, being exposed by its loftiness, is rent by the ſtorm.

It is the violent passion of Love which is the subject of my lucubrations. For the truth is, that a Hypochondriack rarely knows a milder species. I am aware of the juſtness of a remark which a friend, who himself used to be afflicted with Hypochondria, once made to me when we were sauntering in rather a dreary frame, on a winter day in the Mall at Utrecht: "A man, said he, whose mind is clouded with melancholy, when he falls in Love, is apt to ascribe to that passion, a wretchedness which he would have suffered without it, and which is inherent in his temper at the time."[2] I believe this imputation of misery is often true in a great variety of inſtances, as in politicks, nay in religion itself; so that a great deal of the grumbling againſt men in power, and of the morose zeal againſt the opinions and practices of those who differ from us, is only Hypochondria, fixing itself upon external objects, as smoak will reſt upon any objects within its reach, and render them black and dismal. Fielding makes one of the ludicrous personages of his Tragedy of Tragedies, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great, exclaim: "This surely muſt be Love, or else the wind cholick."[3] A Hypochondriack may sometimes very

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[2] The friend was perhaps the Reverend Robert Brown, who had suffered disappointments in his hopes of advancement, and who offered an equally sensible answer to some of Hume's sophistries (*Life of J.*, 2. 10). See also *Boswelliana*, 219–20, where Rogers in a note on his life calls him *William* Brown. The rational observation of this gentleman remained in Boswell's mind; he uses it again in his *Letters*, 2. 305, to persuade himself that a sensitive mind would suffer no more from study than from some other cause.

See also the comment of Dr. Johnson (*Life of J.*, 2. 140):

> Of the passion of love he remarked, that its violence and ill effects were much exaggerated; for who knows any real suffering on that head, more than from the exorbitancy of any other passion?

Contrast to this, Rousseau's citation of Muralt on the passions of the English, in his *Lettre à D'Alembert*, quoted in my Introduction, p. 81. Boswell knew the *Lettre* (cf. *Hyp.* 12 n. 7), and in his remarks on the violence of hypochondriacal (English) lovers may have felt supported by it. On the other hand, he may simply be giving autobiographical hints; see *Hyp.* 11 n. 16.

[3] Boswell quotes from memory (1. 3 . 49),

> I feel a sudden pain within my breaſt,
> Nor know I whether it arise from love
> Or only the wind-colic. Time muſt show.

reasonably ask himself, if the uneasiness which he feels be Love, or the Spleen?

One of the most delicate and justest descriptions of some of the symptoms of serious Love is Lord Lyttelton's little song, the burthen of which is, "Tell me, my heart, if this be Love." I once thought of inserting it in this paper, and of attempting a commentary on it. But upon a more close consideration, I was convinced that it was not in my power to add any thing to the reputation of what is so universally known and admired.[4]

If we consider the principle of utility when speculating on the passion of Love, we shall be at a loss what conclusion to draw from the observations which we make. Marriage is unquestionably the great support of civil society; and in so far as Love conduces to the advancement of that state, it is beneficial.[5] But although Love in a calm and moderate degree is the safe conveyance to the matrimonial harbour, a violent passion, even when it brings us to what we vehemently desire to attain, most commonly produces fatal effects, as a ship driven rapidly upon shore by a tempest is shattered to pieces, or otherwise damaged. Besides, we must keep in mind that as a storm sometimes drives ships from their moor-

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[4] Given anonymously in Dodsley's *Collection of Poems* (5th ed., **2**. 46) as *Song—written in 1732*. Any stanzas of this just, delicate, and universally admired poem will serve to show its beauties, since they are singularly alike from beginning to end:

When Delia on the plain appears,
Aw'd by a thousand tender fears,
I wou'd approach, but dare not move;
Tell me, my Heart, if this be Love?

When fond of pow'r, of beauty vain,
Her nets she spread for ev'ry swain,
I strove to hate, but vainly strove;
Tell me, my Heart, if this be Love?

The first collection of Lord Lyttelton's works was published 1774. The author was George, the first, or "good" Lord Lyttelton (1709–1773), friend and patron of Thomson and Mallet, and author of *Observations on the Conversion of S. Paul* (written to celebrate his own studies and conversion), *Dialogues of the Dead* (cf. *Hyp.* 34), and *History of Henry the Second*, the punctuation of which aroused Johnson's mirth (*Life of J.*, **3**. 37).

[5] See for this effort to establish utility *Hyp.* 24, where the usefulness of censure is set aside as of less importance than benevolence. Boswell perhaps drew his opinions for the subject from General Paoli; cf. *Life of J.*, **2**. 190. See also *Hyp.* 27, 37.

ings into the ocean, so Love not unfrequently loosens the conjugal anchors, and sets its victims adrift upon the waves of licentiousness.

Could marriage be entered upon with the same cool and prudent forethought with which people enter upon other contracts; as for instance, permanent copartneries in trade, it may be thought that there would be fewer disappointments in that state, and that the advantages which the parties propose to themselves would be more constant and durable. But such is the constitution of our natures, that the advantages of the conjugal copartnery consist in the gratification of the passion of Love; at least these are the advantages which affect the imagination so strongly, as to induce people to engage themselves in an indissoluble contract, attended with many certain inconveniencies, and at the risk of many more. Without Love therefore, there would be very few marriages; since it is but a small proportion of mankind who have wealth enough to enable them to marry principally with a view to join stocks, so as to have the comforts and elegancies of life more at command by an union of their different powers.

Whatever respect I have for the institution of marriage, and however much I am convinced that it upon the whole produces rational happiness, I cannot but be of opinion that the passion of Love has been improperly feigned as continuing long after the conjugal knot has been tied.[6] Milton, who should be allowed to be a very competent judge of the felicity of marriage, as he engaged himself no less than three times in that state, has given us a most enchanting picture of wedded Love, and represented the connubial bed in all the alluring description of Arabian fancy.

> Here Love his golden shafts employs—here lights
> His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
> Reigns here and revels,—[7]

Yet there is no doubt that experience affords sufficient con-

[6] This may be one of the "*points où nos âmes sont unies* as Rousseau said to me in his wild retreat" (Boswell to Wilkes, 1776—*Letters of B.*, 1. 248). See Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, 4. 14, and the note appended by the author, to the effect that women cannot expect constancy unless they preserve the same looks, age, humor, etc., and that love and marriage are two distinct experiences.

[7] *Par. Lost*, 4. 764. It appears either that Boswell's knowledge of the character of Milton's unhappy marital ventures is incomplete, or that he is indulging in unfeeling flippancy.

viction that all the rapture, when rapture has been felt, is very transient. I do not limit its existence to any precise portion of time, either with the French poet *que le jour du marriage fut le tombeau de l'amour*, that the day of marriage was the tomb of Love; or with the proverbial expression, that it lasts no longer than the honey moon. But it is surely very short.[8]

That there should be Love at first between those who are to be united for ever by marriage, seems very necessary. Warmth of passion being as requisite for coalescence of minds, as heat for the cohesion of metals. But they are ill prepared for happiness, who delude themselves with hopes that what is the compound effect of distance, restraint, and novelty, should subsist in intimacy, freedom, and sameness. It is to those who indulge such unreasonable expectations, that Flatman's Poetical Reflexion is applicable:

> Wedlock puts Love upon the rack,
> Makes it confess 'tis still the same
> In icy age as it appear'd
> At first when all was lively flame.[9]

The mutual complacency and kind attachment to which married people may attain, will be found to produce more happiness than the agitations of the passion of Love.

To return to the passion of Love with all its feverish anxiety, that being the principal subject which I wish to keep in view in this paper; it is to be observed that there is in it no mixture of disinterested kindness for the person who is the object of it. We have indeed many poetical instances of an affectation of this, where a rejected lover prays for blessings on his Delia, and hopes she shall be happy with a more deserving swain. But we may be certain that these are false expressions; for the natural sentiment in such a situation is hatred, and that of the bitterest kind. We do

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[8] See the answer to this discussion of love versus marriage in *Hyp.* 42, 43, and notes.

[9] Thomas Flatman (1637–1688), a poet about whose merits Johnson and Boswell disagreed; see *Life of J.*, 3. 33–34. He was a miniature painter as well as a poet, and Granger said of him, "One of his heads is worth a ream of his Pindarics." The stanza quoted is the third of *The Resolve, A Song*, published in his *Poems and Songs*, 1674.

The irregular sentences of Boswell's text are typical of his hasty composition; see *Hyp.* 59 n. 7.

not feel for her who is the object of our amorous passion, any thing similar to the natural affection of a mother for her child, of which so fine a test is related in the judgement of Solomon,[10] where the true mother, with melting tenderness, intreated that her child should be delivered to a stranger, who contended with her for the right to it, rather than it should be destroyed. On the contrary, the fondness for the object of our Love is purely selfish, and nothing can be more natural and just than what Lucy in the Beggar's Opera, says to her dear Captain Macheath, "I love thee so, that I could sooner bear to see thee hanged, than in the arms of another." The natural effect of disappointed Love, however shocking it may appear, is to excite the most horrid resentment against its object, at least to make us prefer the destruction of our mistress, to seeing her possessed by a rival. I say this is unrestrained nature, and wherever passion is stronger than principle, it bursts forth into horrid deeds. Not many years ago a young gentleman of very good family in Ireland was executed for the murther of a young lady with whom he was in Love, whom he shot in the coach with her father, as she was on the road to be married to another. And so strong was the sense of untutored mankind in his behalf, that the populace rose in a tumultuous manner to rescue him from justice, and the sentence of the law could not be fulfilled but by the aid of a large body of soldiers.[11]

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[10] *1 Kings*, 3. 16–28. For discussion of natural affection and the strong interest of the Johnsonian circle in the subject, see *Hyp.* 45 and notes.

[11] As far as I can find out, Boswell is not quite *authentick* here. The murderer was John Macnaughton, a ruined gamester, who sought to replenish his fortune by marrying Miss Knox of Prehen, daughter of Andrew [Richard?] Knox, member of Parliament for Donegal. Her friends would not consent, and he could not inveigle her into a secret marriage; on one occasion he read the marriage-service to her, apparently in jest, and insisted on her making the responses, which she did, adding every time *Provided my father gives his consent.* A suit to constitute this a legal marriage falling through, Macnaughton hired a group of rascals to stop the coach in which she was riding with her parents, on the pretense that he was claiming his lawful wife, November 10, 1761. In the exchange of shots that ensued Miss Knox was wounded, and died three hours later. Macnaughton was tried at Strabane December 11 and executed December 15; throughout the proceedings he spoke of the girl as his "wife," and gave many evidences of sorrow. At his hanging he jumped from the cart with such violence that the rope broke, and a second one had to be adjusted. The Annual Register, from which I take my information chiefly,

I had once a dispute with a philosopher of the first eminence, whether or not a man, whose addresses have been refused by a woman, should think it a disparagement to him. I maintained that he should not, because it is no more than a proof that he is not agreeable to her particular fancy; and he may have a full conviction that the man whom she prefers to him is his inferior in every respect. But it was given against me upon this medium, that a man who has unsuccessfully attempted to please, has reason to be humbled by his failure, and other women regard with inferiority him who they know has been rejected.[12]

No wonder then that disappointed Love is one of the keenest distresses with which a human being can be tormented. As he who is so unfortunately afflicted suffers at once the unhappiness of being prevented from the enjoyment of what he ardently wishes

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is somewhat vague about the mob of "untutored mankind" which Boswell mentions, but it is evident that, though there was no violence, there must have been some display of sympathy for the criminal:

> As no carpenter could be found to make the gallows, the sheriff looked out for a tree . . . . and the execution must have been performed on it, had not the uncle of the young lady, and some other gentlemen, made the gallows. . . . . The sheriff was even obliged to take a party of soldiers and force a smith to take off his bolts: otherwise he must have been obliged, contrary to law, to execute him with his bolts. The spectators, who saw him drop, when the rope broke, looked upon it as some contrivance for his escape, which they favored all they could by running away from the place and leaving it open. The populace would not probably have been so well disposed towards him, had they known of his horrid design of murder; but they had been persuaded that he only meant to get possession of his wife.

See *Annual Reg.* 1761 (*Characters*, 73–81); Cunningham, *Letters of Horace Walpole*, 3. 481 and note; Bradshaw, *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*, 3. 1274–75 and note.

[12] The philosopher may have been Rousseau, whom Boswell sought out directly after his difficulties with Mlle de Zuylen (the *Zélide* of his letters); to whom he gave a full account of his life; and from whom he evidently gained considerable sympathy—see *Letters of B.*, 1. 58, 62, 65, 76, 248. The suggestion of Rousseau in the preceding paragraphs (cf. n. 2, 6) supports the possibility.

I think it more likely to have been Johnson, however; the passage seems to me a continuation of a conversation recorded in the *Life of J.*, 2. 432:

> It being asked whether it was reasonable for a man to be angry at another whom a woman had preferred to him; JOHNSON. "I do not see, Sir, that it is reasonable for a man to be angry at another, whom a woman has preferred to him: but angry he is, no doubt; and he is loath to be angry at himself."

The reasonable tone of the answer in the essay is far more characteristic of Johnson than of Rousseau.

From the engraving by Hogarth

"Visiting the Receptacles of Insanity"

to possess, and the pain of having his pride severely hurt, than which nothing shakes the mind more forcibly. Accordingly disappointed Love is one of the most frequent causes of madness, as every body may be convinced, who has curiosity and firmness sufficient to visit the receptacles of insanity, and contemplate human nature in ruins.[13]

Virgil has thought the passion of Love enters so deep into the mind, that he has supposed it to go with us to the other world, and to be there one of the distinguished causes of uneasiness; for in his description of the infernal regions, in that wonderful effort of genius, the sixth book of the Æneid, we find,

> *Hic quos durus amor crudeli tabe peredit,*
> *Secreti celant calles et myrtea circum*
> *Sylva tegit; curæ non ipsa in morte relinquunt.*[14]
>
> Not far from thence the mournful fields appear,
> (So call'd from Lovers that inhabit there)
> The souls whom that unhappy flame invades,
> In secret solitude and myrtle shades
> Make endless moans, and pining with desire,
> Lament, too late, their unextinguished fire.—Dryden.

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[13] Cf. *Hyp.* 63 n. 9 for more definite record of Boswell's visits to the asylums.

[14] This passage was printed carelessly, and left uncorrected by Boswell; in the original text 'tabe' was *tale;* 'celant,' *colant;* 'curæ,' *cure.* Boswell was evidently as fond of Virgil's sixth book as his applause here signifies; he alludes to parts of it again in *Hyp.* 51.

No. XIV. Nov. 1778.

[ON DEATH]

Sicuti in hostem ita et in mortem invictus animus fuit.—JUSTIN.[1]

That magnanimity, which never was depressed by the sight of an enemy, bore him up even against the approach of death.

DEATH is the most aweful and interesting subject on which the thoughts of man can be employed; and I have always considered it as one of the wonderful circumstances in human nature, that, notwithstanding the absolute certainty with which every man knows that he is to die, so great a proportion of life is passed without thinking of it at all.[2] It is true, the precise time and manner of it are concealed from men in general, capital convicts only having that knowledge imparted to them; and this obscurity at the utmost verge of our prospect, instead of shocking the mind as a determinate object of terrour does, seems to yield and recede from its approach, and gives room for fancy to form a slender species of hope, which floats in the void, unless crushed by a close examination. But it is surely strange that beings of strong intelligence and vigorous views of futurity should be kept quiet, and prevented from startling by so thin a veil.

In this, as in a thousand other instances, we cannot but discern, with the fullest conviction, the wise and kind operation of Providence, which having found it necessary that we should continue for a time in this state of existence, in our progress to a better, disposes our minds to receive such a degree of apprehension of Death, as to make every one, not void of reflexion, resolve at least to exert his endeavours in preparing for his great change, while at the same time present concerns, by their immediate influence, preserve his lively and most frequent attention.

The greatest object, if viewed at a prodigious distance, will not

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[1] *Historiae Philipp.*, 12. 15. 4.

[2] Cf. *Hyp.* 2, 3, 15, 16, and *Life of J.*, 2. 107 (1769):

I mentioned to him that I had seen the execution of several convicts at Tyburn, two days before, and that none of them seemed to be under any concern. JOHNSON. "Most of them, Sir, have never thought at all."

Cf. also Young's *Night Thoughts*, 5—"Because they do not think of death, they die!"

affect our perceptions so strongly as a much smaller one that is near to us. Thus it is as to Death and the comparatively little objects which occur in the common course of our lives. We are so framed, that what is present must ever press upon us so strongly as to render us very little concerned about the future, unless we are able to counteract the natural workings of our minds by studied intellectual exertions and contrary habits. This is not to be done in any degree without more than ordinary spiritual acquirements; and such are the unceasing effects of mere sensation and its consequences, that I question if even the monks of La Trappe, whose whole time is spent in the closest seclusion and silence, and exercises of solemn meditation and piety, are able in reality to fix their thoughts upon Death during any considerable part of each day. Their form of salutation to each other being the only words which they are permitted to speak, viz. *memento mori*, "remember death"—is a proof that they require to have their recollection occasionally awakened, as Philip of Macedon had one, who every morning in the midst of his magnificence and power, whispered him, "remember, Sir, you are a man."[3]

It has been argued by some ingenious and fanciful men, whose abilities were not great enough to make them be distinguished upon plain and common ground, and who therefore placed themselves on the summits of singularity; it has been argued by such, that the fear of Death is not natural to mankind; that the savage, who is to be admired and envied *as the man of Nature*, lives in health and dies in tranquillity; and that all the dreary notions of mortality have been produced by priests to subject the minds of their fellow-creatures to their influence.[4]

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[3] Cf. *Hyp.* 63, and *The Rambler*, 17:

It is recorded of some eastern monarch, that he kept an officer in his house, whose employment it was to remind him of his mortality, by calling out every morning, at a stated hour, Remember, Prince, that thou shalt die.

The Spectator, 597, repeats the legend as that of "a famous Macedonian prince" who was bidden to "remember that he was a man."

On the absurdity of the monastic discipline of silence, see Johnson's remark in *Life of J.*, 2. 497–98.

[4] Cf. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in that fifteenth chapter which so scandalized his contemporaries (see *Life of J.*, 3. 277); he makes two comments on the subject, separated by several pages of text:

The petitions which were offered on the altars of Jupiter or Apollo expressed the

That the fear of Death will be less terrible in proportion as a being thinks less I shall not deny. But I suppose few of my readers would incline to be degraded to the ſtate of the lamb, whose inconſiderate fearleſsness is so well described by Pope:

> "Pleas'd to the laſt he crops the flowery food,
> And licks the hand juſt rais'd to shed his blood."[5]

Neither, I hope, would many be content to obtain an exemption from their aweful anxiety, at the price of being turned into savages. That savages have not the fear of Death I do not believe; but if it is so, the reason can only be, that their whole attention is occupied in procuring themselves food and watching for safety, so that their views extend not to futurity more than those of the wild beaſts of the desert. For it is matter of demonſtration, that if the thoughts of Death come into the mind of man at all, they muſt ſtrike him with at leaſt a very serious concern.

Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Julius Cæsar this speech:

> "Cowards die many times before their deaths:
> The valiant never taſte of death but once.
> Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,

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anxiety of their worshippers for temporal happiness, and their ignorance or indifference concerning a future life. The important truth of the immortality of the soul was inculcated with more diligence as well as success in India, in Assyria, in Egypt, and in Gaul; and since we cannot attribute such a difference to the superior knowledge of the barbarians, we muſt ascribe it to the influence of an eſtablished prieſthood, which employed the motives of virtue as the inſtrument of ambition. . . . .

. . . . The careless polytheiſt, assailed by new and unexpected terrors, againſt which neither his prieſts nor his philosophers could afford him any certain protection, was very frequently terrified and subdued by the menace of eternal tortures.

See also Hume's comments on the power of the priesthood in his essay *Of Superstition and Enthusiasm* (*Essays*, ed. Green and Grose, 1. 147 ff.)

Boswell accepts the belief of Johnson and Rousseau in preference; see *Life of J.*, 2. 107:

Boswell. "But is not the fear of death natural to man?" Johnson. "So much so, Sir, that the whole of life is but keeping away the thoughts of it."

See also *ibid.*, 2. 122, 341; 3. 174, 179, 334; *Hebr.*, 205; and Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, 3. 21, where several points in the *Hypochondriack's* discussion are found:

Nous avons tous reçus de la nature une très grande horreur de la mort, et cette horreur déguise à nos yeux les misères de la condition humaine. On supporte long temps une vie pénible et douloureuse avant de se résoudre à la quitter; mais quand une fois l'ennui de vivre l'emporte sur l'horreur de mourir, alors la vie eſt evidemment un grand mal.

See also *ibid.*, 1. 57.

[5] *Essay on Man*, 1. 83–84.

It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come."[6]

Of this passage the two first lines are exceedingly animated; but the rest of it is, in my opinion, an irrational rhapsody. For, surely, it is not the most strange of all wonders, that one should fear Death, since it cannot be disputed that Death involves in it every object of regret, and every possibility of evil. If Death is to be considered as the extinction of our being, I need only appeal to the genuine feelings of every one of my readers for the justice of the reflexions in Addison's celebrated soliloquy of Cato, though lately cavilled at by a French minute philosopher and critick.[7] The thought of being at once and for ever deprived of every thing that is agreeable and dear to us must doubtless be very distressing. If to part with one affectionate friend, to lose one valuable piece of property, gives us pain, what must be the affliction which the thought of parting with all our friends, and losing all our property must occasion. It is in vain for the sophist to argue, that upon the supposition of our being annihilated, we shall have no affliction as we can have no consciousness. For all but very dull men will confess, that though we may be insensible of the reality when it takes place, the *thought* of it is dismal.[8]

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[6] *J. C.*, 2. 2 . 32—a favorite passage, in spite of Boswell's criticism; it appears again in *Hyp.* 15 and 22.

[7] *Cato*, 5. 1. It was not only the French who criticized Addison's poetry unfavorably; see Johnson's comments in his *Life of Addison*. In the *Life of J.*, 1. 261 n. 1, Boswell expresses his intention of defending in "another work" Addison's "unjustly depreciated" poetry. He spent some time in the *Life* itself defending Addison's prose (1. 259–60). Cf. *Hyp.* 38 n. 14.

[8] Cf. *Hyp.* 55, and *Life of J.*, 2. 341:

[Johnson] had, indeed, an aweful dread of death, or rather, "of something after death;" and what rational man, who seriously thinks of quitting all that he has ever known, and going into a new and untried state of being, can be without that dread? But his fear was from reflection; his courage natural.

See also *ibid.*, 1. 274 n. 1, 423; *Hebr.*, 360; *The Rambler*, 78. On one occasion Boswell "endeavoured to maintain that the fear of [death] could be got over," and put forward David Hume and Samuel Foote as examples, but Johnson scouted the remarks of both (*Life of J.*, 2. 122); another time Miss Seward entered the ranks of the "sophists" (*ibid.*, 3. 336):

Miss Seward. "There is one mode of the fear of death which is certainly absurd; and that is the dread of annihilation, which is only a pleasing sleep without a dream." John-

But no body can be *certain* of annihilation; and the thought of entering upon a scene of being, altogether unknown, which *may be* unhappy in an extreme degree, is without question very alarming. If a man were to be put on board a ship which had landed in Britain from a remote region with which and its inhabitants we are utterly unacquainted, and should know that he is never to return home again, but to pass the rest of his days in that region, he would I believe be reckoned very stupid if he should be unconcerned. Yet death presents to the imagination suppositions still more terrifying.

In the Play of *Measure for Measure* Shakespeare gives us most natural, as well as highly poetical sentiments of Death in the character of *Claudio*, who after his sister has talked with unthinking levity, thus

> "Oh! were it but my life,
> I'd throw it down for your deliverance
> As frankly as a pin"

seriously expresses himself in a short sentence

> "Death's a fearful thing."

and a little after.

> "Aye but to die and go we know not where,
> To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
> This sensible warm motion to become
> A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling regions of thick ribbed ice;
> To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
> Of those, that lawless and uncertain thoughts
> Imagine howling; 'tis too horrible!
> The weariest and most loathed worldly life
> That age, ache, penury, imprisonment
> Can lay on nature, is a paradise
> To what we fear of death."[9]

son. "It is neither pleasing, nor sleep. It is nothing. Now mere existence is so much better than nothing, that one would rather exist even in pain, than not exist. . . . . The lady confounds annihilation, which is nothing, with the apprehension of it, which is dreadful."

[9] This quotation from *Measure for Measure*, 3. 1, was a favorite of Johnson's; see *Life of J.*, 4. 460–61 n. 5. The passage shows Boswell's exceedingly erratic punctuation to introduce quotation.

Thus an infidel, who has a lively imagination, may upon his own principles be frightened when he thinks of Death. For infidelity, as to a future ſtate, can carry a man no farther than ſcepticism; and it is ſufficient to excite fear in a ſtrong degree, that ſuch horrible ſituations as Shakeſpeare fancies, in the verſes which I have laſt quoted, are even poſſible.

Neither in my apprehenſion can any man whoſe mind is not naturally dull, or grown callous by age, be without uneaſineſs when he looks forward to the act of diſſolution itſelf. A Hypochondriack fancies himſelf at different times ſuffering death in all the various ways in which it has been obſerved; and thus he dies many times before his death. I myſelf have been frequently terrified, and diſmally afflicted in this way; nor can I yet ſecure my mind againſt it at gloomy ſeaſons of dejection.[10] When one has found relief by any remedy, however accidental, it is humane to mention it to others. I am therefore to inform my hypochondriack brethren, who may have the ſame horrible imaginings of Death which I have had, that I have found ſenſible conſolation from a very pretty paſſage which I chanced to read ſeveral years ago in the Critical Review for January 1770. In giving an account of Dr. Stennett's Diſcourſes on perſonal Religion, a ſtriking and expreſſive deſcription of the horrours of dying is quoted from that book, upon which the Reviewer has the following reflexion. "It is certain indeed that the fear of Death is one of the ſtrongeſt paſſions implanted in human nature, and wiſely ordained by Providence as a ſort of guard to retain mankind within their appointed ſtation. Yet, poſſibly, there are not thoſe agonies in dying which

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[10] Cf. *Hyp.* 16, and *Letters of B.*, 1. 239:

While afflicted with melancholy, all the doubts which have ever diſturbed thinking men, come upon me. I awake in the night, dreading annihilation or being thrown into ſome horrible ſtate of being.

See alſo *ibid.*, 2. 306; *Hebr.*, 159—

I awakened very early. I began to imagine that the landlord, being about to emigrate, might murder us to get our money, and lay it upon the ſoldiers. . . . . Such groundleſs fears will ariſe in the mind, before it has reſumed its vigour after ſleep! Dr. Johnſon had had the ſame kind of ideas.

and 321—

Amidſt all theſe terrifying circumſtances [of the ſtorm at ſea] I endeavoured to compoſe my mind. It was not eaſy to do it; for all the ſtories that I had heard of the dangerous ſailing among the Hebrides . . . . came full upon my recollection. When I thought of thoſe who were deareſt to me, and would ſuffer ſeverely, ſhould I be loſt, I upbraided myſelf, as not having a ſufficient cauſe for putting myſelf in ſuch danger.

are usually supposed, many things appear more formidable in imagination than they are in reality. When we are in perfect health and vivacity, we have a horrible idea of sickness and confinement; but when we are actually sick and confined, we are more insensible to the pleasures and gaieties of the world and reconciled to the alteration. As our distemper increases, we begin to be disgusted with life and wish to be released. The aspect of Death becomes more familiar as it approaches. As nature sinks into dissolution we gradually lose the power of sensation. The interval of departure is short and transient: the change imperceptible. No reflexion, and therefore no pain succeeds. The soul forgets her anxiety, and sinks into repose; and if there is a pain, there is, upon christian principles, a bliss in dying. We may perhaps reconcile ourselves, in some measure, to the thoughts of our decease, by observing how sleep pervades the human frame, and suspends its operations. With what ease do we pass from waking to sleeping! With how little concern do we part with the knowledge of light and of ourselves! And if this temporary insensibility, this image of Death, steals upon us imperceptibly, if we feel an inexpressible sweetness in that situation, why may we not imagine that the *senses* glide away in the same soft and easy manner, when nature sinks into the profoundest repose?" There are few more beautiful pieces of writing than this. And indeed I have often wondered at the excellence of writing which I have found in the Reviews, when I considered the authors being anonymous could not be stimulated by the hopes of praise. It is however to be remembered, that immortal Shakespeare himself

"For gain not glory wing'd his daring flight."[11]

And we have seen from the evidence brought by Dr. Shebbeare in a court of justice, that the gain of Reviewers is very liberal.[12]

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[11] Pope, *Sat.*, 5. 71. Boswell quotes from memory Pope's *Satires in Imitation of Horace*, 5. 71: "daring" should be "roving."

[12] Cf. *Life of J.*, 3. 51:

> We talked of the Reviews . . . . Sir Joshua said, what I have often thought, that he wondered to find so much good writing employed in them, when the authours were to remain unknown, and so could not have the motive of fame. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, those who write in them, write well, in order to be paid well."

By 1783, Boswell had changed his mind as to the propriety of high rewards and fine writing in reviews (*Life of J.*, 4. 247):

Besides, I can imagine that a Reviewer, after having his mind warmed by the perusal of a good book, and feeling that elevation which attends those who are to give sentence, may have his powers in greater vigour than upon any other occasion.

Notwithstanding my persuasion that the fear of Death is rational, and will ever be found in a thinking being, I am very willing to allow all proper respect to that firmness and fortitude of which some men are possessed, who while they are sensible of the aweful importance of launching from one state of being into another, support the thoughts of it with a calmness and humble hope becoming at once the dignity of human nature, and the humble confidence of piety.

I mentioned the very liberal payment which had been received for reviewing; and, as evidence of this, that it had been proved in a trial, that Dr. Shebbeare had received six guineas a sheet for that kind of literary labor. . . . . Boswell. "Pray, Sir, by a sheet of review is it meant that it shall be all of the writer's own composition? or are extracts, made from the book reviewed, deducted." [*sic*] Johnson. "No, Sir, it is a sheet, no matter of what." Boswell. "I think that it is not reasonable."

Boswell concludes,

One however, ... might be led, from the practice of reviewers, to suppose that they take a pleasure in original writing; for we often find, that instead of giving an accurate account of what has been done by the authour whose work they are reviewing, which is surely the proper business of a literary journal, they produce some plausible and ingenious conceits of their own, upon the topicks which have been discussed.

Johnson hints that this practice is especially true of the Critical Reviewers, in the *Life of J.*, 3. 37.

John Shebbeare, the Tory writer (1709–1788), was trained as a surgeon, but found writing more remunerative; his most famous work was *Letters on the English Nation* "by Battista Angeloni, a Jesuit resident in London" (1756), which Boswell mentions with applause in the *Life of J.*, 4. 131. Shebbeare continued to write pamphlets with a strong Jacobite tinge under the title *Letters to the People of England*, remarking in the coffee-houses the while that he was sure of either pension or pillory. The sixth letter produced sentence to the pillory, mildly executed (*Boswelliana*, 283); he was tried and sentenced for libel in 1758. Upon his release from prison he attacked the enemies of the administration, notably John Wilkes, and in 1764 reaped his reward in a pension of £200. Johnson and he, the "He-bear and the She-bear," were bracketed together in Whig pamphlets as corrupt Tory pensioners. Shebbeare is depicted in Hogarth's *Polling at the Hustings* as a manacled figure with *The 6th Letter to the* . . . . protruding from his pocket.

No. XV. Dec. 1778.

[ON DEATH—*Continued*]

Mors quam pertimescimus ac recusamus intermittit vitam, non eripit.
—SENECA.[1]

"Death, which we so much fear, and from which we shrink, is but an intermission of life, and not its destruction."

THE STOICKS, who must be acknowledged to have been the most exalted philosophers amongst the ancient heathens, have employed much ingenious and able reasoning to endeavour to produce a conviction that Death should not be feared. Their labours have in general only served to show what an arduous task they have in vain undertaken, and that Death truely is, what an eminent philosopher of another sect has emphatically called it τῶν φοβερῶν φοβερώτατον; "of all dreadful things the most dreadful."

Yet in the writings of Seneca, of whom the Stoicks had just reason to boast, we find many admirable reflections upon the subject of death; and the passage, which I have chosen for a motto to this paper, is the sum and substance of what man can rationally hope without the help of revelation.

Seneca, indeed, before getting to this point, allows his mind to expatiate in a fanciful manner, though still with a high degree of spirit. He reasons well, that we see nothing in nature absolutely destroyed, but only a continual succession of changes in forms and properties, from light to darkness, from heat to cold, from one size and shape to another; and the conclusion is certainly fair, that *spirit,* or that principle which animates the human race, will not perish, though it may undergo a new modification. Upon this hypothesis, we may consider Death as the crucible into which a soul is thrown, to be brought out in a much purer state, after a proper space of time.

The proud proposition of the Stoicks, that a wise man should raise himself above every species of fear, has made Seneca strain his genius to frame an artificial persuasion that Death is not terrible; for he reasons very well, that it is not in the nature of things that we can face with courage, what really appears to us

[1] *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Mor.*, 36.

at the time to be terrible. But all his suggestions will be found to be very fallacious.

It is wonderful to observe how palpable a fallacy will be admitted, even by so great a man as Seneca, when he has a favourite system to maintain. After using various arguments to prove that a man ought not to be afraid of Death, he gives, with a serious appearance of conviction, the following conclusive argument: *Denique finem faciam, si hoc unum adjecero; nec infantes nec pueros nec mente lapsos timere mortem, & esse turpissimum si eam securitatem nobis ratio non præstat, ad quam stultitia perducit.* "I shall conclude with this only other consideration: neither infants nor boys, nor insane persons, are afraid of Death. Would it not be a shame then, if reason should not be able to yield us that security which folly supplies?" Is it not evidence, that the insensibility of mind which he substitutes in the place of courage, is compatible only with ignorance, and folly or madness; for that reason, if in due exercise, must discover the terrours of Death? He might as well have argued in favour of corporeal insensibility, by saying that a stock or a stone can receive the severest blows without complaining of pain; and what a shame must it be if philosophy cannot enable us to suffer with as much patience as a stock or a stone. In my last number I reminded my readers of the fearlessness of the lamb under the hands of the butcher, which is truely similar to that *security* which Seneca here would make reason emulous to obtain.

Shakespeare's ranting ratiocination in the mouth of Julius Cæsar, which I also considered in my last number, refers just to a different kind of insensibility. That of the lamb, or of the infant, is mildly stupid: that of the blustering hero is turbulently feverish. That men should not fear death, "Seeing that Death, a necessary end, will come when it will come," is such philosophy as we find in the old military song.

> Why, soldiers why,
> Should we be melancholy boys,
> Whose business is to die?[2]

[2] See Chappell, *Old English Ditties*, 228, and Wooldridge-Chappell, *Old English Popular Music*, 2. 134; the tune is variously known as *The Duke of Berwick's March*, *Why Soldiers Why*, or *How Stands the Glass Around?* Legend supposes the song to have been written by General Wolfe at Quebec,

With much juſter feelings of nature and truth did the diſtreſſed father, who was weeping for the loſs of his ſon, answer the affected, unfeeling ſophiſt, who ſaid to him, that it was in vain to lament as his ſon would never return. It is for that very reaſon that he is not to return that I lament.[3] Undoubtedly the *certainty* of death, the poſitive aſſurance that "it will come," ſhould reaſonably operate on our minds, ſo as to make it more an object of fear than if it were uncertain; ſo that it is a moſt extraordinary doctrine to maintain that it is moſt ſtrange we ſhould fear death, ſeeing that it is a neceſſary end, and will certainly come.[4] Supposing a number of men condemned to be broke alive upon the wheel, and abſolutely without hopes of a reprieve, would the certainty of that horrible puniſhment make them leſs afraid of it; nay,[5] ſupposing a number of men to know for certain that each of them is to have a leg cut off, would they not be reckoned frantick ſhould they ſing with a joyful exultation, that they ought not to be melancholy, as amputation was to be

but it was popular before 1729, when it was used in *The Patron, or The Statesman's Opera:*

Why, soldiers, why
Should we be melancholy, boys?
Why, soldiers, why?
Whose business 'tis to die!
What! Sighing? Fie!
Damn fear! drink on, be jolly, boys!
'Tis he, you, or I:
Cold, hot, wet, or dry,
We're always bound to follow, boys,
And scorn to fly.

'Tis but in vain
(I mean not to upbraid you, boys)
'Tis but in vain
For soldiers to complain:
Should next campaign
Send us to Him who made us, boys,
We're free from pain;
But should we remain,
A bottle and kind landlady
Cures all again.

[3] Diog. Laertius, *Life of Solon*, 16. The anecdote is narrated in Montaigne's *Apologie de Raimond Sebond.*

[4] In 1791 Boswell writes to Temple of his "want of *absolute certainty* of being happy after death, the *sure proſpect* of which is *frightful.*" (*Letters of B.*, 2. 431.)

[5] In the original, *pray*. Corrected by a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 16.

their fate. Yet to have a leg cut off is a much lesser evil than to die, and is therefore submitted to in order to prevent Death.

Let us not then vainly endeavour to persuade ourselves that Death is not an evil; but seriously think of the myſterious truth, that there muſt have been some "mortal taſte," some deviation from good, which has "brought death into the world, and all our woe;" let us ſtudy to obtain such relief as our merciful Creator is pleased to allow us.[6]

To die the death of the righteous, and that our latter end may be like his, is a pious wish. But it is to be observed, that although moſt commonly men die as they live, continue much the same to the laſt moment of their exiſtence here, and not only "feel the ruling passion ſtrong in Death,"[7] but even retain the same temper and manners to which they have been long habituated; yet in some inſtances the beſt of men, when that aweful hour of trial comes, are not only incapable of behaving with magnanimity, but even have not a decent composure; and on the other hand, men of very bad characters have died in appearance nobly; as is elegantly remarked by Cicero, *Mors honeſta sæpe turpem vitam exornat.* "A disgraceful life is often adorned by an honourable death."[8]

There are three ways in which the fear of Death may be escaped or alleviated:—Insensibility, of which I have already treated[9]—Attention in a ſtrong degree to some other object—And a Religious Exercise of all the Faculties and Affections. The second of these was suggeſted to me by an illuſtrious foreigner, who has made England his residence for a considerable part of his life. He observed that all men are alike afraid of Death when they see it in all its terrours. But that some men, either from circumſtances, or from a vigorous power of exertion, have in the hour of Death, their attention fixed on something else, to such a degree, that Death cannot impress them deeply. Thus almoſt every man who dies in publick behaves with fortitude, his atten-

[6] Boswell quotes the opening lines of *Paradise Lost.* For his extraordinary theory that relief from the fear of death could be attained by watching public executions, see *Hyp.* 68 and notes. Cf. also n. 11 to this essay, below, and *Hyp.* 16 notes 5, 6.

[7] Pope, *Mor. Eſs.*, 1. 263.

[8] *Pro P. Quinct.*, 49—"Mors honesta saepe *vitam quoque turpem exornat.*"

[9] See *Hyp.* 2, 3, 14.

tion being so much taken up by the spectators who are around him, and by the ambition of being seen to advantage, that Death itself is scarcely in his view.

The third way by which the fear of Death may be escaped or alleviated, to wit, by a Religious Exercise of all the Faculties and Affections, is the only way which a wise man would wish to follow; the two former ways being no better than being blind-folded, that one may not see a precipice down which he is to fall, or being deafened by the noise of drums or shoutings, that one may not hear the approach of a ruffian who is to assassinate him.[10]

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[10] The eminent foreigner is General Pascal Paoli (1725–1807), who as dictator of Corsica received Boswell when he visited the island in 1765. He was successful in beating off the Genoese, but when they sold their rights in Corsica to France, he was obliged to submit to superior force, and sought refuge in England. He returned to Corsica during the French Revolution with rank of lieutenant-general, but disgusted with the excesses of the terrorists, he caused the island to secede from France, and became president of a new government, offering suzerainty to Great Britain. He received no support, and in 1796 was obliged to exile himself again; England gave him a pension as evidence of hospitable intent.

Boswell gives a direct quotation of Paoli's observations on death in the *Life of J.*, 3. 175 (1777):

> Dr. Johnson was much pleased with a remark which I told him was made to me by General Paoli:—"That it is impossible not to be afraid of death; and that those who at the time of dying are not afraid, are not thinking of death, but of applause, or something else, which keeps death out of their sight: so that all men are equally afraid of death when they see it; only some have a power of turning their sight away from it better than others."

Boswell's fuller phrasing in the essay is less reminiscent of the terms of this passage than of paragraphs in Montaigne's essay *Of Diversion*, concerning the same idea (Cotton's translation):

> The poor wretches that we see brought upon the Scaffold, full of an ardent devotion, and therein, as much as in them lies, employing all their Senses, their Ears in hearing the instructions are given them, their Eyes and Hands lifted up towards Heaven, their Voices in loud Prayers, with a vehement and continual emotion, are doubtless things very commendable and proper for such a necessity. We ought to commend them for their Devotion, but not properly for their constancy. They shun the encounter, they direct their thoughts from the consideration of death, as Children are amused with some Toy or other, when the Chirurgeon is going to give them a prick with his lancet. . . . .
>
> We always think of something else: either the hope of a better Life comforts and supports us, or the hope of our Children's Valour, or the future glory of our Name, or the leaving behind the evils of this Life, or the Vengeance that threatens those who are the causers of our death, administers Consolation to us.

See also *Life of J.*, 2. 93, 122; 3. 174—"He added, that it had been observed, that scarce any man dies in publick, but with apparent resolution; from that desire of praise which never quits us"; *Hebr.*, 452—"He said, that he believed hardly any man died without affectation." See anecdotes of Sir

In this the wiseſt of the ancients were very defective, the conjectures of natural reason with respect to a future ſtate being so unſteady. Some of them indeed, when in a fine flow of spirits, seem to have looked forward to the world beyond the grave, with a very bold and luxuriant imagination. But the same persons have at other times been altogether dubious as to the reality of their hopes. We who have the happiness of being favoured with a divine Revelation, by which "Life and Immortality are clearly brought to light," have at all seasons a "sure word of promise,"[11] on which we can rely, and on the faith of which we can confide with an humble dependence on those aids which Heaven imparts to sincere chriſtians.

It is not my province to compose regular sermons, and I wish to avoid encroaching on ground which I am ill fitted for occupying. But as we are told in the Life of Addison, that he thought he might do much good to religion by occasional recommendations of it, when it could not be said that he acted professionally,[12] I would willingly do any little good in this way[13] that is in my power; and I would at present recommend to my readers, to eſtablish in their minds the capital article of our moſt holy faith, a pamphlet so short, that they can read it in a little time, and therefore frequently, if needful, and so accurate and diſtinct, that a candid mind will scarcely fail to be convinced by it. I mean

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Thomas More in *Boswelliana*, 302; *Hebr.*, 229, 452 n. 3; and remarks upon the jests of convicted Frenchmen in *Garrick Correspondence*, 2. 483–85.

[11] *2 Tim.*, 1. 10—"Our Savior who hath . . . . brought life and immortality to light"; *2 Pet.*, 1. 19—"and we have the word of prophecy made more sure." See Boswell's narrative of the death of Edward Dilly (*Letters of B.*, 2. 285):

> He is in an as agreable [*sic*] a frame as any Chriſtian can be. Repeats the second paragraph of Dr. Young's second *Night*, "Why ſtart at Death?" etc., and another passage, "Death a subterraneous road to bliss," or some such words. I am edified here.

[12] Not the remark of Addison himself. Boswell is making an allusion by memory to Tickell's *Life of Addison* (prefatory to the first collected edition of Addison's works, 1721), in which the biographer makes the statement that Addison did not take orders because he felt too keenly the responsibility of the priesthood, with the added comment—

> It is happy that this very circumſtance has since turned so much to the advantage of Virtue and Religion; in the cause of which, he has beſtowed his labours the more successfully, as they were his voluntary, not his necessary employment.

[13] *Way* is inserted at the direction of a note by Boswell printed at the end of *Hyp.* 16.

the Trial of the Witnesses for the Resurrection of Jesus.[14] And to direct and habituate them in the practice of devotion, with a view to the subject of this essay, I would recommend *Erasmus de*

[14] By Thomas Sherlock (1678–1761), Bishop successively of Bangor, Salisbury, and London. He is said to have been popular even with dissenters. The book was written (1729) in answer to Thomas Woolston's *Discourses on the Miracles*, in which the miracles of Christ were allegorized; it was considered "a very ingenious treatise," and ran through fourteen editions—a comment on the taste of religious readers of the eighteenth century. The opening paragraphs show sufficiently the scheme of the work, and one or two from the body of the argument will show the quality of it:

We were, not long since, some Gentlemen of the Inns of Court together, each to other so well known, that no Man's Presence was a Confinement to any other, from speaking his Mind on any Subject that happen'd to arise in Conversation. The Meeting was without Design, and the Discourse, as in like Case, various. . . . . One, who maintain'd the favourable side to *Woolston*, discover'd a great Liking and Approbation of his Discourses against the Miracles of Christ, and seem'd to think his Arguments unanswerable. To which another replyed, I wonder that one of your Abilities, and bred to the Profession of the Law, which teaches us to consider the Nature of Evidence, and its proper Weight, can be of that Opinion; I am sure you would be unwilling to determine a Property of Five Shillings upon such Evidence, as you now think material enough to overthrow the Miracles of Christ.

It may easily be imagin'd that this open'd a Door to much Dispute, ... but the Thread of it was broken by several Digressions, and the Pursuit of things which were brought accidentally into the Discourse. At length one of the Company said pleasantly, Gentlemen, you don't argue like Lawyers; If I were Judge in this Cause, I would hold you better to the Point. The Company took the Hint, and cry'd, they should be glad to have the Cause re-heard, and him to be the Judge.

The case is opened on an appointed day with formalities of court procedure; Mr. *A.* speaks for the side of Woolston, Mr. *B.* on the side of the angels:

Mr. *A.* My Lord, there has hardly been an Instance of a false Religion in the World, but it has also afforded a like Instance to this before us. Have they not all pretended to Inspiration? . . . . Did they not all converse with the Gods, and pretend to deliver Oracles?

Mr. *B.* This only shews that Revelation is by the common Consent of Mankind the very best Foundation of Religion, and therefore every Impostor pretends to it. But is a Man's hiding himself in a Cave for some Years, and then coming out into the World, to be compar'd to a Man's dying and rising to Life again? . . . .

Mr. *A.* Sir, I suppose it will be allow'd to be as great a thing to go to Heaven and converse with Angels, and with God, and to come down to the Earth again, as it is to die and rise again? Now this very thing *Mahomet* pretended to do, and all his Disciples believe it, Can you deny this Fact?

Mr. *B.* Deny it, Sir? No. But tell us who went with *Mahomet?* Who were his Witnesses? I expect before we have done to hear of the Guards set over the Sepulchre of Christ, and the Seal of the Stone: What Guard watch'd *Mahomet* in his going and returning? What Seals and Credentials had he? . . . . You have *Mahomet's* Word; and no Man ever told a Lie, but you had *his* Word for the Truth of what he said. . . . . But this Story, it is said, has gain'd great Credit, and is receiv'd by many Nations. Very well: and how was it receiv'd? Was not every Man converted to this Faith with the Sword at his Throat?

The Judge's summing up, and the conclusion of the case, is equally profound:

We are now come to the last, and indeed the most weighty Consideration. The Council for the Apostles having in the Course of the Argument allow'd, that more Evidence is required to support the Credit of the Resurrection, it being a very extraordinary Event,

præparatione ad mortem, an excellent performance of that great man, which I have long thought of translating into English. For, making allowance for some of his peculiarities as a moderate Roman Catholick, I know no piece of writing better calculated for conducting a christian through this life to that which is to come.

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than is necessary in common Cases; in the latter Part of his Defence sets forth the extraordinary Evidence upon which this Fact stands; this is the Evidence of the Spirit; the Spirit of Wisdom and Power, which was given to the Apostles, to enable them to confirm their Testimony by Signs and Wonders, and mighty Works. . . . .

The Council for *Woolston*, in his Reply, made two Objections to this Evidence.

The first was this: That the Resurrection having all along been pleaded to be a Matter of Fact and an Object of Sense, to recur to Miracles for the Proof of it, is to take it out of its proper Evidence, the Evidence of Sense, and to rest it upon a Proof which cannot be apply'd to it; for seeing one Miracle, he says, is no Evidence that another Miracle was wrought before it. . . . .

To clear this Difficulty, you must consider by what train of Reasoning Miracles come to be Proofs in any Case. A Miracle of itself proves nothing, unless this only, that there is a Cause equal to the producing the Effect we see. Suppose you should see a Man raise one from the Dead, and he should go away and say nothing to you, you would not find that any Fact or any Proposition was prov'd or disprov'd bv this Miracle; but should he declare to you in the Name of him by whose Power the Miracle was wrought, that Image-Worship was unlawful, you would then be possess'd of a Proof against Image-Worship. But how? Not because the Miracle proves anything as to the Point itself, but because the Man's Declaration is authoriz'd by him who wrought the Miracle in Conformation of his Doctrine; and therefore Miracles are directly a Proof of the Authority of Persons, and not of the Truth of Things. . . . .

The second objection was, That this Evidence, however good it may be in its kind, is yet nothing to us; it was well, the Gentleman says, for those who had it; but what is that to us who have it not?

To adjust this difficulty, I must observe to you, that the Evidence now under Consideration was not a private Evidence of the Spirit, or any inward Light, like to that which the Quakers in our Time pretend to, but an Evidence appearing in the manifest and visible Works of the Spirit; and this Evidence was capable of being transmitted, and actually has been transmitted to us upon unquestionable Authority; and to allow the Evidence to have been good in the first Ages, and not in this, seems to me to be a contradiction to the Rules of Reasoning; for if we see enough to judge that the first Ages had reason to believe, we must needs see at the same time that it is reasonable for us also to believe.

The case is submitted to the jury, who return the verdict that the apostles were not guilty of giving false evidence; the tone of the conclusion is worthy of the rest, and possibly explains the popularity of the work and the author:

The Company rose up, and were beginning to pay their Compliments to the Judge and the Council, but were interrupted by a Gentleman, who went up to the Judge and offer'd him a Fee. . . . . A Fee to the Judge is a Bribe, said the Judge. True, Sir, said the Gentleman; but you have resign'd your Commission. . . . . Now *Lazarus's* Case is to come on next, and this Fee is to retain you on his Side. There follow'd a confus'd noise of all speaking together, to persuade the Judge to take the Fee; but as the Trial had lasted longer than I had expected . . . . I was forc'd to slip away; and whether the Judge was prevail'd on to undertake the Cause of *Lazarus* or no, I cannot say.

No. XVI. Jan. 1779.

[ON DEATH—*Concluded*]

Sed cautus fueris si mortem ubique expectaveris.
—Barclai Argenis.[1]

"It is prudent to be every where prepared for Death."

MY READERS, at least some of them, may perhaps find fault with me for not giving them variety enough in these my speculations; for I have given them three consecutive papers upon Love, and I am now to give a third, without interruption upon Death; but I shall fairly acknowledge, that *The Hypochondriack* writes from the primary motive of pleasing himself, being persuaded that he who does not please himself, that is to say, indulge his own inclination at the time, will hardly please other people—*Si vis me flere dolendum est primum ipsë tibi*—"If you would make me weep you must first sorrow yourself," says the poet;[2] and I do not suppose that pleasure is less sympathetick than sadness. I flatter myself that my two former papers upon Death have not made that aweful subject more gloomy. If I thought otherwise I should certainly desist; for, though I write to please myself, I desire to be understood, that it is in the belief that I am hurting nobody; for it is my sincere sentiment, that I would hold as accursed any composition, however excellent in its manner not only if it should "make one worthy man my foe,"[3] but it should even lessen the peace and comfort of any of the human race, however weak or inconsiderable.

After I had resolved to write this one other paper on the subject of Death, I happened to be looking into the Argenis of Barclay, a book which had once more celebrity than it now has,

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[1] The *Argenis* of John Barclay (1582–1621), a political allegory disguised as a romance, was finished shortly before his death, and printed in Paris in the same year. It ran into many editions, and had considerable influence upon such seventeenth-century romances as Fénelon's *Télémaque* (which Boswell also knew —see *Hyp.* 9). Of Barclay's Latin, which Boswell praises in this essay, Millar says (*Literary History of Scotland*, 245), "[It] is not exactly classical, but it is vigorous and lively." The work was translated into English twice in the seventeenth century, and by Clara Reeve in 1772 under the title, *The Phœnix*.

[2] Horace, *Ars Poet.*, 101. [3] Pope, *Prol. to Sat.*, 283.

but which, in my opinion, ought still to maintain the place which its merit acquired amongst our *stock books*, to borrow a phrase from the theatre, when plays in frequent representation are mentioned; for it not only abounds in learning, in imagination, and in virtuous notions, but is written in Latin uncommonly elegant for a modern writer, although it has been censured for something of studied conceit in the style, which, however, is always warranted by classical authority.

In that book I lighted upon a passage concerning Death, which immediately attracted my attention—*Sed Theopompum nihil afficiebat magis quam objecta toties imago mortis: ne vivam inquit, nihil ita me terret ac illa, dum mentem noctu obversatur, mortis memoria.*—"But Theopompus was affected with nothing more than the image of Death being so often presented. Let me die, said he, if any thing terrifies me so much as the remembrance of Death coming upon my mind in the night time."—Night is universally the season of terrour, (for Comus's crew, and those of congenial manners, with them need scarcely be named;) and the habitual terrour of real dangers in silence and darkness disposes us insensibly to be more affected in these circumstances with objects of fear, which are then truely no worse than at noon-day. All my readers, especially my own brethren, who have laboured under Hypochondria, have experienced how direful the thought of Death is when one lies awake in the middle of the night, so that the feelings of Theopompus will be acknowledged to be justly described.[4]

As a short episode, or relaxation from this discourse of Death, I shall entertain my critical readers with a little controversy concerning the interpetration of one expression, which was carried on amongst a knot of literati, who came into the library where I was considering the passage in Barclay. The expression which occasioned the dispute was *ne vivam.* One maintained that it should be rendered thus—*nihil ita me terret ne vivam*—"nothing so much terrifies me *that I shall not live.*" Another—"nothing so much terrifies me, even to such a degree that *I am ready to die for fear of Death.* Another—"that the words are *an oath*, as thus, *let me die* if any thing terrifies me so much."—I at first

[4] Cf. *Hyp.* 14, n. 10.

inclined to the first opinion, but afterwards, though not with positive conviction, preferred the last. The expression *ne vivam* occurs as an oath in Cicero's sixteenth epistle to Atticus—*ne vivam si scio*—"Let me die if I know."[4a]

Theopompus, a young nobleman, in the vigour of youth, after having made the natural and candid confession of his fear of Death, feels a warm glow of animation, and with a momentary burst of spirit, uncontrolled by reason, endeavours to rise above the apprehension of what he boasts is very distant from him, and then says—*quid juvant ante senectæ tempora ea cogitatione torqueri ad mortem, ante mortem ipsam oppetere?*—"Why torment one's self before old age with that thought, so as to anticipate Death before it actually comes."—The venerable sage, between whom and Theopompus a dialogue is supposed to be carried on, checks, with a mild wisdom, the young nobleman's impetuosity, and, with a solemn affecting eloquence, enumerates a few of the various innumerable ways in which Death attacks us; after which comes the motto of this paper—*Sed cautus fueris si mortem ubique expectaveris*—"It is prudent to be every where prepared for Death."

In my paper upon *Fear* I delivered my disapprobation of a doctrine inculcated by some writers, that we should meditate upon evils which may happen to us, in order that the violence of the shock may be gentler when it really comes. But I would make an exception as to Death, because Death is not really an evil which *may* happen, but an evil which *will certainly* happen; and because, by a proper preparation for it, we may render it less hurtful, both with respect to our concerns in this world, and those in the world beyond the grave. I would not indulge the thought of death to excess; but as Dr. Young counsels us, would

"Give it its wholesome empire."[5]

It has indeed frequently struck me with a mixture of wonder

[4a] The erratic punctuation of this passage is that of the magazine text, which apparently satisfied Boswell, since he left no corrections.

[5] *Night Thoughts*, 3. Boswell was constantly fortifying his mind for death; this was his reason for attending executions—see *Hyp.* 68 and notes; *Life of J.*, Index, under Boswell, *executions*.

His essays *The Profession of a Player* (in the London Magazine, 39, for 1770), suggest that he frequented tragedies for the same reason; a large part of

and dejection to think how very few men have even their worldly affairs so set in order, that their death would not occasion many perplexities and unhappy wants, which care might easily have been taken to prevent and supply. The distribution of property amongst relations; the appointment of guardians to children; the selection and arrangement of papers, are often neglected till Death has put it out of the power of a man to do what it would have vexed him exceedingly to be told should be undone.

And how infinitely more important is it to have our souls in a condition fit for a future state; for, without entering upon the theological question, whether our condition shall be irreversibly fixed after Death, no serious Christian will deny that there is at least an immense period at stake, when we make our transition from the present state of being.

The death of kind relations, or friends, is, in my apprehension, the severest affliction which can befall us in respect to this world, for it both impresses us with a lively sense of our own frailty, and deprives us of the best comforts to which we have been habituated; yet, with respect to the other world, and the dreary passage to it, we are really benefited by such affliction, if we make a right use of it, so as that it shall loosen our attachment to earth, and allure us to die with placid hope, as Dr. Young admirably says.

> "Our dying friends are pioneers to smooth
> Our rugged pass to Death, to break those bars
> Of terror and abhorrence nature throws
> 'Cross our obstructed way, and thus to make
> Welcome, as safe, our port from every storm."[6]

I can suppose a man to have more relations and friends whom he loves upon the other side of the grave than upon this, in which situation the attraction to the other world must be so strong as to render his quitting this by no means painful. Cicero exults in the prospect of meeting with illustrious men long ago departed,

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the last paper in the series is devoted to the consideration that tragedians must die like other men after having counterfeited death so often—an idea developed from his letter to Garrick, *Letters of B.*, 1. 183.

He could not persuade Johnson to discuss the subject, however; see *Hyp.* 55 n. 3.

[6] *Night Thoughts*, 3. The idea recurs in parts 7 and 9.

as well as with valued friends;[7] and, after the solemn exercises of religion, I know no kind of meditation which can counteract the natural fear of Death so well as this. One who is to leap across a pit, or ride through a deep water, ought not to look into it, but beyond it.[8]

The thought of Death should have a salutary influence upon our temper and manners. Horace, in that fine ode, where he recommends a decent æquanimity, whether in a prosperous or adverse state, closes his advice with the thought of Death as an effectual argument—*moriture Delli*—"Dellius, as you must die,"[9] has a beautiful pathos; and were the thought of Death oftener present to our minds, I am persuaded we should be much more humane and kindly towards our fellow-creatures, who are to die as well as ourselves. Fellow-convicts, unless when very rugged and hardened wretches indeed, contract an affection for each other!

Were Death the lot only of a few individuals, or were there a particular nation deemed to die, and all the rest of mankind exempted from its horrours, how dismal would Death appear! But its universality alleviates it. The reflexion that—*serius aut citius omnes eodem cogimur*—"sooner or later we must all be gathered

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[7] *De Senectute*, 23. 86. Boswell quotes the passage again in a letter to Wilkes on the death of Churchill (1765): *Letters of B.*, 1. 74.

[8] Boswell makes the same observations on the death of friends in various letters; cf. note 7, and *Letters of B.*, 1. 165:

> I sympathise with you sincerely on the loss of your amiable friend Mr. Spence. But there can be no doubt that he is in better regions, where I hope you and I shall meet him. Were it not for such ideas I know not how a man of sensibility could bear the death of those he loves, or think of his own. (September 1768.)

See also *ibid.*, 1. 201, in which he makes the same allusion to Young:

> Dr. Goldsmith's death would affect all the Club much. I have not been so much affected with any event that has happened of a long time. I wish you would give me who are at a distance, and who cannot get to London this spri[ng s]ome particulars with regard to h[is] last appearances. Dr. Young has a fine thought to this purpose, that every friend who goes before us to the other side of the river of death makes the passage to us the easier. Were our Club all removed to a future world but one or two, they, one should think, would incline to follow. (April 1774.)

See also *ibid.*, 1. 197.

In May 1784, he tried to present this idea to Johnson, but was silenced by a capricious and passionate explosion (*Life of J.*, 4. 322–23). For Johnson's attitude see *Letters of J.*, 1. 180; 2. 349.

[9] *Odes*, 2. 3 . 4. Quoted also in *The Spectator*, 381.

to the same dust."—and that—*Pallida mors æquo pede pulsat pauperum tabernas regumque turres*—"Pale Death knocks equally at the cottages of the poor, and the palaces of kings"[10]— diffuses the evil till it lies comparatively light on every one. Swift, indeed, has given us a sad picture of a nation that were never to die![11] and, no doubt, unless the constitution of human nature were to be totally changed, Death must be acknowledged to be a necessary evil.

Death, after all, as I have formerly observed, is, whatever may be its consequences, immediately an evil, and as an evil, a wise man will prepare himself to receive it. A French authour has published a little book, under the title of, *Reflections sur ceux qui sont morts en plaisantant*—Reflections on those who have died jesting;[12] and he has collected a good many instances, both ancient and modern. But I hold all such extraordinary appearances to be unnatural, affected, or thoughtless; for there is undoubtedly what Dr. Young calls, "a pure, heroical defect of thought."[13] Adrian's dying address to his soul—*Animula vagula, blandula,* &c. is,

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[10] Boswell makes from memory an adaptation of Horace's *Carm.*, 2. 4 . 25:

> Omnes eodem cogimur, omnium versatur urna serius ocius sors exitura . . . .

and *Odes*, 1. 4 . 13. The passage from the *Odes* is quoted also by *The Spectator*, 26. Properly, the line runs,

> mors *æquo pulsat pede* pauperum . . . .

The punctuation of the paragraph is reproduced as Boswell left it.

[11] *Gulliver's Travels*, 3. 10—the Struldbrugs in the country of Luggnagg.

[12] I cannot trace this work. For Boswell's comment on the unnaturalness of such an attitude, cf. *Hyp.* 2, 3, 14. The world *title* in Boswell's introductory phrase was originally printed *tile*, and left uncorrected.

[13] *Night Thoughts*, 7. Boswell's frequent quotation of Young is warranted by his opinion of the poet; cf. *Life of J.*, 1. 249:

> Dr. Young, authour of *The Night Thoughts* [*sic*], of whom my estimation is such, as to reckon his applause an honor even to Johnson.

Johnson, although he called Young "a great man" (*ibid.*, 4. 139), did not agree wholly with Boswell as to his poetic powers; he "believed Young was not a great scholar, nor had studied regularly the art of writing; that there were very fine things in his *Night Thoughts*, though you could not find twenty lines together without some extravagance" (*Hebr.*, 307). An indication of Boswell's tastes is the fact that he seems to have been more disturbed about this disagreement between Johnson and himself than about any other esthetic judgment (*Life of J.*, 4. 70):

indeed, a kind of fluttering, which one may suppose in a man not without thought.[14] One of the most expressive descriptions of the situation of a man about to die was that of an old Scotch laird upon his death-bed. "I am half fleyed (*i.e.* afraid) half new fangled."[15] There must, in a mind of any vivacity, be a mixture of fear and curiosity; and it is strange that curiosity upon that occasion is not stronger, considering what amazing scenes of novelty are about to open.

Seneca, in the passage which I considered in my last number, accounts for the fear of Death partly from the darkness in which we must be during that transition, and he observes that darkness always produces fear. My Lord Bacon, in one of his essays, has the same similitude. "Men, says he, fear Death, as children fear to walk in the dark."[16] Against this fear what a blessed remedy have they, who, trusting in God, can walk "through the valley and shadow of Death." Let us diligently avail ourselves of that "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and with grateful adoration endeavour to obey the precepts of him, who came to "deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage."[17]

. . . . I was most anxious concerning Johnson's decision upon *Night Thoughts*, which I esteem as a mass of the grandest and richest poetry that human genius has ever produced. . . . . There is in this Poem not only all that Johnson so well brings in view, but a power of the *Pathetick* beyond almost any example that I have seen. He who does not feel his nerves shaken, and his heart pierced by many passages in this extraordinary work, particularly by that most affecting one, which describes the gradual torment suffered by the contemplation of an object of affectionate attachment, visibly and certainly decaying into dissolution, must be of a hard and obstinate frame.

To all the other excellencies of *Night Thoughts* let me add the great and peculiar one, that they contain not only the noblest sentiments of virtue, and contemplations on immortality, but the *Christian Sacrifice*, the *Divine Propitiation*, with all its interesting circumstances, and consolations to "a wounded spirit," solemnly and poetically displayed in such imagery and language, as cannot fail to exalt, animate, and soothe the truly pious. No book whatever can be recommended to young persons, with better hopes of seasoning their minds with *vital religion*, than Young's *Night Thoughts*.

[14] Aelius Spartianus, *Hadr.*, 25. See Hill's interesting note on this famous bit, *Life of J.*, 3. 477.

[15] This may very likely have been Sir Alexander Ogilvy, appointed Lord of Session with the title Lord Forglen in 1706. He died in 1727, and Boswell has several anecdotes from his own father on the whimsical actions and sayings of Forglen at the time of his death (*Boswelliana*, 264–65).

[16] *Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral*—2, *Of Death.*

[17] *Psalms*, 23. 4—properly "valley *of the* shadow of Death"; *John*, 1. 9; *Heb.*, 2. 15.

No. XVII. Feb. 1779.

[ON COOKERY]

—*Et a magna non degenerare Culina.*—JUVENAL.[1]
—"Nor in illuſtrious Cookery to decline."

AMONGST the arts by which civilization is marked, that of cookery, or the preparation of victuals for the table, is one of the moſt conſpicuous, and may be ranked with the art of furniſhing commodious and ornamental coverings or dress for the body. In the moſt savage situation mankind devour their meat raw, and go naked; and from this ſtate of brutality there is an ascent by innumerable gradations to the luxury and elegance of a company of ladies and gentlemen of high rank sitting at a dinner in London or Paris.

Cookery, like many other means of enjoyment, has been made an object of violent reprehension by satyriſts. But in my opinion, without juſt cause, and owing entirely to the envy of those who were precluded by their poverty from the satisfactions afforded by it.[2] That there may be bad and unwholesome cookery I do not deny; and I believe dishes are sometimes served up, which may with propriety have the epithet applied to them which is odly enough given by physicians to diet in general, and be called *non-naturals*. But I have been assured by one of the ableſt physicians of the age, whose merit has raised him not only to great eminence in his profession, but to the higheſt literary honours both at home

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[1] *Sat.*, 14. 14; in the magazine text *degenerare* was printed *de generare*, and left uncorrected by Boswell.

[2] The first two paragraphs of this essay are reminiscent in general of the conversation which took place at General Oglethorpe's on April 14, 1778 (*Life of J.*, 3. 320 ff.):

> General Oglethorpe declaimed againſt luxury. JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, every ſtate of society is as luxurious as it can be. Men always take the beſt they can get." OGLETHORPE. "But the beſt depends upon ourselves; and if we can be as well satisfied with plain things, we are in the wrong to accuſtom our palates to what is high-seasoned and expensive. . . . ." JOHNSON. "But hold, Sir; to be merely satisfied is not enough. It is in refinement and elegance that the civiliſed man differs from the savage. A great part of our induſtry, and all our ingenuity is exercised in procuring pleaſure; and, Sir, a hungry man has not the same pleaſure in eating a plain dinner, that a hungry man has in eating a luxurious dinner."

See also *ibid.*, 1. 511, 541, 543; and the allusion to Johnson's projected book on cookery—3. 323.

and abroad,[3] that good cookery is by no means pernicious; but on the contrary, that it is more healthful to eat French dressed dishes than ordinary roast and boiled. Indeed we may conceive that the digestive powers will be more stressed, worn, and hurt by the strong exertion necessary for the dissolution of tough masses, than by the gentle play which is sufficient for substances already much softened and separated. That to make our food savoury or delicious to the palate should render it unwholesome, is a proposition so strange, that it would require to be proved; and if the agreeable relish which cookery gives our victuals, makes us eat more than we should do without it, there must be the same objection to vigorous exercise which has the same effect. I hope then that there is no real danger in any of the two effects of cookery, by which alone it can be hurtful. Therefore Horace's declamation against luxury in eating, and praise of frugal and simple living, which Pope has so admirably imitated and modernised, is but counsel to make a virtue of necessity.[4] It is but like an exhor-

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[3] Boswell's good friend Sir John Pringle (1707–1782), whom Johnson disliked so heartily (*Life of J.*, 3. 74; *Hebr.*, 110, 428, 437. See also for mention of him, the *Life*, 2. 68 n., 188, 492; *Hyp.* 9, 52). He was educated for business, but while living in the Netherlands to get a knowledge of it, he came under the influence of Boerhaave, which determined him to study medicine. In 1734 he was appointed professor of metaphysics and ethics at Edinburgh, but continued to practice medicine; from 1742 to 1748 he was attached to the armies in Europe, attaining to the post of physician-general of the forces in Flanders. On his return, he was honored by appointments as physician to various members of the royal family. He was a fellow of the Royal Society, and in 1772 was elected President; in this capacity he commented on the value of the investigations honored by the award of the Copley medal, in six discourses, later published, singly and together (cf. *Hyp.* 52). Sir John's scientific eminence was recognized by his being chosen (1778) one of the eight foreign members of the Academy of Sciences in Paris, and by numerous similar distinctions conferred by other scientific organizations. His works are listed in the British Museum Catalogue as translated into Italian, French, and German. He was the founder of modern military medicine, studying especially the sanitation of camps; it was no doubt at his suggestion that military hospitals were kept neutral in the wars in Germany. It is an interesting comment on medical science of his day that it was Sir John who first suggested to Boswell the responsibility of evil spirits in cases of madness (*Life of J.*, 3. 200, note).

[4] Horace, *Sat.*, 2. 2, imitated by Pope in *The Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace* (1734). See also Horace, *Sat.*, 1. 6. Boswell did his best to

tation to patience, which is no doubt a wise and commendable quality, when we are unavoidably subjected to evils and wants; yet no rational man will deny that it would be better if we did not stand in need of patience.

That too much pleasure in general is unsafe, as being inconsistent with that moral discipline which religion recommends to us as candidates for immortal happiness, is undoubtedly true. But as none but the severest asceticks deny to themselves or others, the enjoyment of pleasure with due intervals, I cannot see that the pleasure of the table is to be peculiarly condemned. That the pleasure of the table contributes both to the immediate happiness of individuals, and to social benevolence, is proved by frequent experience, against which it is in vain to argue; and although I cannot precisely agree with a hearty fellow who said that a man who loves a good dinner, and gets it every day, is three hundred and sixty five times in a year happy, which he could not be in any other way;[5] I must admit that there is some justice in the observation.

It is not easy to explain how those who practice the art of cookery, which marks civilization, and of which the effects are so benignant, should be held in such low estimation, though very large pecuniary emoluments are allowed them. One should imagine that the enjoyment which we have from a well-dressed dinner would excite a grateful regard for those to whose skill and address we immediately owe it, especially as any great excellence in the art necessarily supposes a certain degree of knowledge in chymistry, as well as a very nice taste. But as one of the ancients said, that he hated the traitor though he loved the treason;[6] so I fear we despise the cook, though we love his dishes. It is curious to consider that those who devote their time and labour to the

join the conventional cry against luxurious living in *Hyp.* 4 and 8, but without signal success.

[5] Johnson said almost as much; cf. *Life of J.*, 1. 541:

At supper this night he talked of good eating with uncommon satisfaction. "Some people (said he,) have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very studiously, and very carefully; for I look upon it, that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else."

Boswell's ensuing observations on Johnson's habits bear out this opinion.

[6] Probably an allusion to the story of Tarpeia, especially as given in Propertius, *Eleg.*, 4. 4.

other art which I observed may be ranked with cookery, that of making clothes, are also looked upon with an unaccountable contempt. A taylor, whose art is not only one of the moſt useful, but bears a large proportion in the elegant appearance of human life, is held in very low eſtimation, perhaps lower than any other tradesman. A man would rather have it said that his father was a blacksmith or a bricklayer than a taylor. Perhaps the mean idea which we entertain of men who have dedicated their lives to the kitchen or the shopboard, may partly be ascribed to the effeminacy of these employments, compared with others where more ſtrength is required; and this idea has been affixed at an early period in human society, when employments were few; for since life has become more diverſified, we find many employments, which require as little ſtrength and less genius, are more regarded.

There is something I think particularly indelicate and disguſting in the idea of a cook-maid. Imagination can easily cherish a fondness for a pretty chambermaid or dairymaid, but one is revolted by the greasiness and scorching connected with the wench who toils in the kitchen. And therefore, though Love which burns in the torrid zone, is, for what I know, as fervent in the kitchen as any where else, and though I have heard a noted ſtory very well atteſted of an attorney in the Exchequer who married his cook-maid, "because she dressed a lovely bit of collop." I cannot much admire the choice which Churchill has made of a simile to represent a young poet wooing the Muses, though I confess it is humourous.

> "When Cupid firſt inſtructs his darts to fly
> "From the sly corner of some cook-maid's eye,
> "The ſtripling raw, juſt enter'd in his teens,
> "Receives the wound and wonders what it means;
> "His heart like dripping melts, and new desire
> "Within him ſtirs each time she ſtirs the fire."[7]

Yet George Buchanan writes very good Latin verses to a cook-maid, to which I refer my learned readers. They begin thus:

[7] *The Prophecy of Famine*, opening lines. The punctuation of the passage in Boswell's text is given as he left it. The crude result may be due to his extreme carelessness in sentence structure (cf. *Hyp.* 59 n. 7); it may be due to his equally careless habit of setting off quoted phrases by a period (cf. *Hyp.* 14 n. 9, and *passim*).

Utriusque juris carniumque et piscium
Leonora docta.

"O Leonora! learned in the laws
Both flesh and fish to dress with high applause."[8]

And complains that a man cook, even though bad at his business, should be preferred by her to youths of rank and generosity.

That cookery has been thought of no small importance in all civilized nations, is plain from books. Homer makes his heroes very attentive to the dressing of their victuals;[9] and we find scat-

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[8] Buchanan's poems to Leonora were written while he was teaching at the new University of Coimbra in Portugal, 1542–1552. That one quoted by Boswell is found in the *Iambon Liber* of *Poemata quae extant* (Amsterdam 1676):

Utriusque juris carniumque et piscium
Leonora docta, dic rogo,
Quo jure sese condiit noster coquus?
Ut unus è tot millibus
Juvenum unus, inquam, placeat et sapiat tibi?
Non ille genere nobilis,
Formave gratus, aut dicax facetiis,
Cultusve doctis artibus:
Sed qui subulcus melior esset, quam coquus
Aut nauta certe, aut bajulus.
Quod si coquus te caperet unus, id tamen
Ferrem, licet cum nausea:
Sed quod coquorum cunque per viciniam est
Insano amore deperis.
Praefers juventae nobili obscurum coquum.
Diti anteponis pauperem:
Foedum decoris, sordidum lautis, hero
Servum, facetis rusticum:
Ut et parentem filiae credam tuae
Coquum fuisse fratribus.
Quo te veneno lixa, coquus, aequarius
Cepere? Quae juri suo
Admiscuere philtra? quaeve Thessalis
Collecta sylvis gramina?
Ut hunc furorem nulla tollant pharmaca,
Nec ulla matris carmina,
Matris peritae detrahere Lunam polo,
Diem tenebris condere
Et è sepulcris ossa legere et funera
Truncare vix dum frigida.
Quid hoc veneni est? cujus iram numinis
Hanc esse laesi existimem?
Nisi forte jure quidquid emerit coquus
Te jure credis vendere.

For biographical note see *Hyp.* 60 n. 14.

[9] *Odyssey*, 14, 15.

tered remarks concerning the art in many places. We are even told that Paulus Emilius, when about to entertain the Romans after a conquest, said, there was equal skill required to set out a magnificent entertainment, and to conduct an army.[10] But we have the cookery of the ancients very fully explained to us by *Apicius Cœlius de Arte Coquinaria*, of which there have been many editions, one of which was published at Amsterdam, with a number of his own annotations, as well as those of others, by Dr. Martin Lister, physician to Queen Anne. This edition gave occasion to some very witty letters prefixed to the art of cookery, a poem in imitation of Horace's art of poetry, a performance exceedingly well executed by Sir John Vanbrugh.[11] Modern books of cookery have been as frequent as histories of England, or commentaries on the bible.

But the professors of the culinary art have in general never been much respected, except in their own eyes; though I have read of the *Great Cook of the Palace*[12] being an officer of high dignity in France, the country which must be allowed to be the Athens

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[10] Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius Paulus* (Loeb edition, § 28).

[11] Dr. Martin Lister, zoölogist, physician, and antiquary (1638?–1712), brought ridicule upon himself by a circumstantial account of a journey to Paris and by his equally meticulous editing of Apicius, *De Opsoniis et Condimentis sive Arte Coquinaria*. The English edition is dated 1705. Two burlesques of his work exist, neither with any notice of Vanbrugh's share in the fun: *The Art of Cookery*, "A Poem in imitation of Horace's *Art of Poetry*. By the author of a *Tale of a Tub*" (1708); and *The Art of Cookery*, "in imitation of Horace's *Art of Poetry*, with some Letters to Dr. Lister and others, occasion'd principally by the title of a book published by the Doctor, being *The Works of Apicius Coelius*. . . . . By the author of the *Journey to London*" [a burlesque on Dr. Lister's first work] (1709).

The author of *The Journey to London* was Dr. William King. It is possible that some of the anonymous letters were written by Vanbrugh, and that Boswell is merely mistaken in his reference.

In the original text of the essay, *coquinaria* was printed *cogninaria*, and left uncorrected by Boswell.

[12] Mme du Barry, upon finding Louis XV enchanted with the productions of her cook, demanded for her the *cordon bleu*, the Royal Order of the *Saint Esprit*. See also *Boswelliana*, 263, on French cooks.

The cook of Frederick the Great was evidently not a negligible person; cf. Casanova's *Memoirs* (Navarre edition, 2. 340):

I hoped to see Noel, the King of Prussia's cook, at Angoulême, but I only found his father, who treated me very well, and also possessed, I found, a veritable talent for making

of that kind of Taſte. Indeed a French cook's notion of his own consequence is prodigious. A friend of mine told me, that he engaged one for Sir Benjamin Keen, when ambassador in Spain,[13] and when he asked the fellow if he had ever dressed any magnificent dinners, the answer was, *Monsieur j'ai accommodé un diner qui faisoit trembler toute la France.*—"Sir, I have dressed a dinner that made all France tremble." There was the sublime of vaunting nonsense in this expression. In my next paper I shall introduce to the acquaintance of my readers an English cook, whom they will find to be an extraordinary personage, and whose elevation of ſtyle I am persuaded will afford them considerable entertainment.

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pâtés. He assured me that he would undertake to send any pâtés I might order all over Europe, to any address I gave him.

This was a large promise, but Casanova took it up, and found that the feat was accomplished in due order.

[13] Sir Benjamin Keen (1697–1757) began his career as agent for the South Sea Company at Madrid through the influence of Robert Walpole; from 1724 until his return to England he represented Great Britain as consul and ambassador in Madrid, continuing his activities as agent in spite of criticism. On going back to England he became a member of Parliament, and later was sent back, first to Portugal and then to Spain, as ambassador. Horace Walpole describes him as "quite fat and easy"—so his cook must have possessed all the skill of which he boasted.

No. XVIII. March 1779.

[ON AN ENGLISH COOK]

Dum nimium vano tumefactus nomine gaudes.—MARTIAL.[1]
"With disproportioned vanity you swell."

THE personage whom in my last paper I engaged to introduce to the acquaintance of my readers in this, is *Mr. Charles Carter*, a very eminent cook, as I suppose, who about fifty years ago published a magnificent quarto volume upon his own profession, illustrated with suitable engravings to convey at once to the eye, the effect of his festal arrangements.

His title-page is ample and pompous, and must be read with a full pronunciation and important tone.

The COMPLETE PRACTICAL COOK: or, a new SYSTEM of the whole ART and MYSTERY of COOKERY. Being a select Collection of above five hundred Recipes for dressing after the most *curious* and *elegant* Manner (as well foreign as English) all Kinds of Flesh, Fish, Fowl, &c.

As also Directions to make all Sorts of excellent Pottages and Soups, fine Pastry, both sweet and savoury, delicate Puddings, exquisite Sauces, and rich Jellies. With the best Rules for Preserving, Potting, Pickling, &c.

Fitted for all occasions. But more especially for the most grand and sumptuous Entertainments.

Adorned with sixty curious Copper Plates; exhibiting the full Seasons of the Year, and Tables proper for every Month: As also Variety of large Ovals and Rounds, and Ambogues and Square Tables for Coronation-Feasts, Instalments, &c.

The whole entirely new; and none of the Recipes ever published in any Treatise of this kind.

Approved by divers of the PRIME NOBILITY; and by several Masters of the Art and Mystery of Cookery.

By CHARLES CARTER, lately Cook to his Grace the Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Pontefract, the Lord Cornwallis, &c.

London: Printed for W. Meadows, in Cornhill; C. Rivington, in St. Paul's Church yard; and R. Hett, in the Poultry. MDCCXXX.

His dedication, contrary to what we might have expected, is short and simple.

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[1] *Epigr.*, 4. 11. 1.

To the Right Honourable William-Anne Keppel, Earl of Albemarle, Viscount Bury, and Baron of Ashford, &c.[2] This Treatise on the noble Art and Mystery of Cookery, is most humbly dedicated by his Lordship's most obliged, and most faithful humble servant, Charles Carter.

Perhaps Mr. Carter was so elevated with his own importance and fancied dignity, that he thought it beneath his character to stoop to the hackneyed flattery of dedication.[3] Or perhaps he considered that he had occasion for so many epithets of praise for himself and his "Art and Mystery," that he could spare none for panegyrick upon a patron. Having so far exhausted his store of big expression in his title page, he seems to have drawn his breath in the interval of penning his dedication, that he might break forth with renewed vigour in his prefatory address, which is truely a master-piece. I once intended to have selected choice passages from it. But every sentence of it is so supereminent in its way, that I could not find in my heart to mangle the curious whole by leaving out any part, I shall therefore give his performance entire, marking with *italicks* the most exquisite expressions.

To the Reader.

The many books already published on the subject of Cookery may seem in the opinions of some people, to render useless the present undertaking: and indeed were the number of books which treat of this *noble art and mystery* the consideration, rather than the *worth* and *excellency* of the *matter*, sufficient reason would not be wanting to countenance that opinion.

But when it is considered that *variety* and *novelty* are no small parts of the *Cook's art*, and that no occupation in the world is more obliged to *invention* every year, and every *ingenious artist* constantly producing *new experiments* to gratify the taste of that part of mankind, whose splendid circumstances make them *emulous* to *excell* in the *delicacies of this mystery;* especially when they exert their *wealth and their magnificence* to entertain their friends with *grand and sumptuous repasts*, it will be allowed, that *no art* can be said less to have *reached perfection* than this, and that none is more capable of improvement, and of consequence that

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[2] William-Anne Keppel, second Earl of Albemarle, etc. (1702–1754), was lieutenant-colonel of the Grenadier company in the Coldstream Guards at fifteen; he represented the power of England at Gibraltar, Virginia, the Low Countries, and Culloden. He rose to the posts of privy councillor and Lord Justice at home, and acted as ambassador to Paris for the peace of 1748.

[3] Cf. *Hyp.* 60 and 61, and *Life of J.*, Index under DEDICATION.

none can with more justice challenge a right to a kind reception than treatises of this nature, which shall be found to be drawn up with *art* and *judgement*, and the rules whereof shall be reduceable to the true standard of practice and experience.

For my own particular, I would not be thought to extol the present performance, because it is my own, above what it will bear; but so much I think I owe *to justice and to my own character* as to declare, that this is almost the only book that has of late years been published, the recipes whereof are the result of the author's practice, and to which the name of the writer has been put *without any other consideration* than *the publick service:* and the *little low arts* used by persons who have wanted to vamp up old books, and pass them upon the world for new, with the name of a modern artist prefixed, who has *had no other hand in the whole, than the extending of it to receive five or ten guineas for the credit of his name*, are so well known, that I need not descend to particulars on this head; nor would I be thought to recommend my own performance, by depreciating those of others. No; let them and mine too pass the *unerring test* of experience and practice, and *stand or fall according to their usefulness and their merit.* The reader will soon see, that though here is nothing omitted that may please those who have not the *highest taste* of *elegant eating*, yet that the following rules are chiefly calculated for the more *grand* and *sumptuous* manner of entertainments; for it will be very easy for an ordinary cook when he is well instructed in the *most elegant parts of his profession*, to *lower his hand* at any time; and he that can excellently perform in a *courtly* and *grand manner* will never be at a loss in any other, and indeed the more sumptuous part of this art is what has hitherto been most wanted to be handled; for while the books on this subject are stuffed with *affected nostrums* which every one of the least practice knew before, and which *even the humble scullion was not unacquainted with*, the *masters* of the *profession* have always studied to keep to themselves the *most useful* and *noble mysteries* of their *art*, and have thought that to *reveal* an *important secret* in their *profession* was to depreciate their business, and render themselves less useful to themselves; which I must beg their pardon for presuming to say is a conduct and manner of thinking that appears to me very injudicious; for I would fain know if the *good execution* of the business of a Cook is not a very *capital* part of his profession, *for what signifies all the knowledge in the world if due care be not taken to put that knowledge into practice* by a happy execution of *the art of dressing*, and if the Cook knows not how skillfully to *blend*, to *season*, to *alter*, to *diversify*, and a multitude of other niceties, on every one of which, even the minutest, frequently depends *the success of the best endeavours.*

For this reason it appears to me as clear as the sun, that if *gentlemen* were made a little acquainted with some of the *sovereign rules* of this *noble art*, they would the less depend upon the *unartful management* of a *dark-proceeding*, and often *ignorant juggler*, who under the *cloak* of reserving to himself the *secrets* of his *profession*, is only affecting a *sullen* and perhaps *saucy pre-eminence* in his way, to conceal his ignorance, which were it once discovered his noble master would not for the sake of saving a few pounds per annum, reject a *thorough-paced artist*, and suffer a *raw* and perhaps *tavern-bred dabbler* in the *science*, to waste and destroy the most costly ingredients to no manner of purpose, and so of consequence a *due value* would be put upon the *thorough-bred artist*. And indeed it was *always my opinion*, and I have had reason on many occasions to confirm it to be right, that in all occupations that pursue an *honest* and *fair intention*, the less of *mystery* the operator assumes the more pleasure he gives his principal, and the better gratification he reaps himself, besides the satisfaction he receives in having removed all *dark suspicions* of *unfair practices*, and finding himself eased of the trouble of explaining himself upon *every slight occasion*.

And indeed to this assuming ignorance of some, and *impolitic reservedness* of others, it is owing that a good *English Cook* is often slighted, and some of our most hospitable noblemen and ladies cannot think themselves well served till they have sent to a *neighbouring kingdom* for a cook who indeed by the *poverty of his country* (compared to ours) and the *variousness of humour* of its *flippant inhabitants*, whose *gouts* are perpetually changing, is *pushed so much upon his invention* that he may sometimes be allowed to surpass (on English materials especially) with his *mimicking vivacity*, the *sounder-taught native* especially where *nature* is to be *disguised* and *lost in art*, and *the palate is to be puzzled rather than pleased*.

These reasons will excuse me to my brethren for *exploring* the *mysteries* of a *profession* that must be the more valued the more it is known; and, indeed, the kind reception my endeavours to please my several noble masters, whom I have served abroad as well as at home, and who have been pleased to *prefer me to the Cooks of other nations*, merits my most grateful returns, particularly I pride myself in the satisfaction I have given to the *brave and hospitable General Wood*, whom I had the honour to serve in some of his *glorious campaigns* in Flanders, and *who inspired me to emulate*, in my mean way, *as much to surpass a French cook, as he did a French General;* as also in the pleasure I had the honour to give the *excellent Lord Whitworth* in several of his *splendid ambassies*, particularly to *Berlin*, the *Hague*, &c., as also to *Esquire Poley*, formerly *envoy from the crown of England to the illustrious court of Hanover*, and to his *Excellency General Wade* in *Spain* and *Portugal*, about the year 1710,

and in *the honour* I have had in serving his grace the *Duke* of *Argyll* at home, as well as *my noble Lords Pontefract, Lempster, Cornwallis,*[4] and other *truly noble peers,* whom I might presume to enumerate, all which has given me opportunities to get an insight into the customs and modes of different nations, and to chuse with some distinction from all, what might gratify the *most elegant* and *various tastes,* to say nothing of the *foundation* given me by *my late father* (to which however I am most indebted) *who was excellent in this profession,* and had *extracted the quintessence* of the art *from a long race of predecessors, all practical Cooks of some eminence.*

The reader will forgive me this, as it may seem *a little too vainglorious,* and which I think no otherwise excuseable than as it lets him into what he may expect from the following collection, which I present to the publick as the genuine performance of my father and self, all the rules tried and experienced, and which have had the good luck to be applauded by our respective principals.

I am so much unused to addresses of this nature, that I have already run myself out of breath, and shall not take up too much of my reader's time; but however think it necessary to point out particularly the excellence of a few of the following recipes, which may serve as a brief specimen of the goodness of the rest, and shall particularly hint that the rules given in page 3 for making olios, those in page 5 for terrenes; the three several ways for the cray-fish pottage, in page 23, 24, 25, those for bisques in page 7, for pocket soup page 8, for hams, Dutch beef, and mutton ham-fashion, page 201; and for chequered and ribband jellies in page 178, 179, are among those that I would principally recommend as the *choicest,* the *richest,* and *most valuable* of their kind, and what cannot

[4] Boswell's quotation tells almost as much of these gentlemen as one can now discover anywhere. Charles, Lord Whitworth (1675–1725), represented England in Russia, Vienna, Prussia, and The Hague, and at the Congress of Cambray, between the years 1704 and 1721. General Wade (1673–1748), an adjutant general in his twenty-first year, served in the Spanish wars and the Jacobite rebellion of 1715; he managed the disarmament of the clans with such tact as to become actually popular in Scotland. Later he became commander-in-chief of the British forces in the Low Countries and the rebellion of 1745. See *Hebr.*, 152. Thomas Fermor, only son of William Fermor (who was made Baron Lempster or Leominster—of Leominster, in Herefordshire—in 1692), was advanced to an earldom in 1721 by the title of first Earl of Pomfret or Pontefract, Yorkshire (d. 1753). The father, a connoisseur, purchased the Arundel marbles for the family seat at Easton Neston; the son is remembered chiefly for his efforts to "restore" them—his greatest achievement being a modern head for a statue of Cicero (cf. *Letters of Horace Walpole,* 1. 6; 2. 264). For the Duke of Argyll see *Hyp.* 2. The rest is silence.

fail with any tolerable care and skill to give the *greateſt credit* to the *operator*, and the *higheſt ſatisfaction* and *delight* to the *taſter*.

As to the *plates* which I have given so *unexampled a variety of*, I am perſuaded those of the ſeaſons will be found particularly uſeful, as they exhibit at one eaſy and clear view all that is neceſſary and can be procured in every month throughout the year to *adorn* and *embelliſh*, and even to *conſtitute the eſſence* of the *grandeſt entertainment*, and which are the *foundation*, and at the ſame time the *epitome* of all the ſucceeding plates, and indeed my late *much valued friend, Mr. Auſtin, maſter of Pontack's*, in Abchurch-lane,[5] who was an *excellent judge* in this *noble art*, was ſo well pleaſed with them, that he requeſted a copy of me which he very much eſteemed, and gratified me for it in a manner as *anſwerable to his ſpirit* as it was *ſuperior to my expectation*.

By help of thoſe numerous plates a nobleman or gentleman will be enabled at a view to pick and choose what ſervices he likes for any particular occaſion, and his choice will by this means be in a manner *recorded* for his *future change* or *imitation*, and a *bill of fare* naturally *ſettled* to his hand *on all the various occaſions that may occur throughout every ſtage of his life, and through every advance of his fortune, his honour, or his felicity*, or on any ſuch *choſen days* as he may deſire to *celebrate* or *diſtinguiſh* by *particular marks* of his *joy*, his *gratitude*, his *pleaſure* or *grandeur* in the moſt *elegant* and *ſumptuous entertainments*.

They are beſides methodically diſpoſed, as well for ſecond as for firſt courſes, to fit a nine diſh table oval with all manner of varieties in ſeaſon, together with changes for pottages and diſhes for the ſide-board, the names of every diſh being inſerted in the circles. They begin with the month of March, that being the ſpring month which may be ſaid to *uſher in the whole year*, and all is performed in ſo exact a manner that *infallible methods* are thereby pointed out for ſettling a table in the moſt *beautiful* and *elegant* manner, *beyond the power of miſtake*, ſo that all other direction and aſſiſtance which at great entertainments is generally the buſineſs of *a particular officer deputed for that purpoſe*, is thereby rendered unneceſſary.

To render the whole intelligible to the moſt unſkilful in this *noble art*, I have given at the latter end of the book a brief explanation of the

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[5] See Wheatley, *Hogarth's London*, 274:

The moſt expenſive and eſteemed reſort of the faſhionable world from the Reſtoration to about the year 1780 [and evidently famous for its wines, according to Swift's *Journal to Stella*]. The ſite [in Langbourn Ward] was occupied before the Great Fire by the White Bear, but on the rebuilding a Frenchman described by Evelyn as M. Pontack, ſon of the Preſident of Bordeaux, owner of a diſtrict whence are imported to England ſome of the moſt eſteemed claret, was encouraged to eſtabliſh a tavern with all the novelties of French cookery. .... In the early years of the Royal Society the Fellows dined at Pontack's.

foreign or technical terms that occur throughout the work, and as I have also added in alphabetical order, a table of the contents of the book, pointing to the page where each recipe may be found, the reader will easily be able to refer by means of the said table to any dish mentioned in the plates, which renders the whole performance so complete, that all manner of embarrassment or difficulty is prevented.

On the whole, I may venture to say, *there is nothing of this nature extant equal to it*, which I may be the bolder to assert because no *eminent practical cook* before ever cared to publish what he knew of the *art*, and though one or two pieces have been published under the names of *distinguished artists*, which I will be *so tender of the property of others* as not to mention, yet it is well known they never inserted any thing material in them; but for the sake of a premium lent their names to the pieces, as one of them in particular often declared to me and others, on *reproaching* him with giving his *approbation* to *compositions unworthy of it*. But this I might have spared, having hinted it above, and refer also to what I have said already to excuse myself to my *brethren of the art*, for the *discoveries* I have made of several *valuable secrets*, which for the sake of the *reputation of my practice*, I thought myself obliged to give, as I was prevailed upon to appear in this publick way, or else to let the whole performance still continue private, and they will perceive as I hinted that the *art* depends so much upon *judicious practice*, that there will be allways room enough for an *experienced, thorough-bred Cook* to meet with due encouragement, let gentlemen have what insight they will into the *mystery*.

One thing I may take upon me further to say, and with that I will conclude: So *noble a market* as Leadenhall, the finest in the world,[6] as well as several other well furnished publick markets about this great and opulent metropolis, afford such continual supplies for the table, that no Cook can be at a loss for elegancies of every kind while he is near the

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[6] Cf. *London in 1731*, by "Don Manoel Gonzales," p. 36:

Leadenhall Market, the finest shambles in Europe, lies between Leadenhall Street and Fenchurch Street. Of the three courts or yards that it consists of, the first . . . . contains in length from north to south 164 feet, and in breadth . . . . east to west 80 feet: within this court, ... round about the same, are about one hundred standing stalls for butchers, for the selling of beef only, and therefore this court is called the beef market. These stalls are either under warehouses, or sheltered from the weather by roofs. . . . . This yard is on Tuesdays a market for leather.

The other two courts described by the supposed Don were devoted to veal, lamb, mutton, and herb markets. See also Gay's *Trivia*, on the specialties of various London markets:

> Wouldst thou with mighty beef augment thy meal?
> Seek Leadenhall; St. James's sends thee veal;
> Thames Street gives cheeses,

and so forth.

town to *gratify the moſt extensive wish*, and to *indulge the moſt profuse spirit of hospitality*. But there are seats of the nobility and gentry so incommodiously situated even in this land of plenty, at such a diſtance from any considerable market, and the seasons of the year may at some times be so *unpropitious* for celebrating some wished-for occasions, that the gardens, the fish-ponds, the parks, the warrens, and adjacent farm yards may be all insufficient to furnish out that *ample variety* which may be necessary to set forth to advantage the *magnificence* and *splendor* of the *noble benefactor*. What in this case can be done, if there be not an *ingenious Cook* to *vary* and *diversify?* and who by his *invention* can supply the deficiency of the season and incommodiousness of the situation, and by that means as it were *create new dishes* to *gratify the palate*, and who can make the *allmoſt unknown vegetables* by his skill in dressing *contributory to his art*, Several of the ensuing recipes will promote the invention of such a Cook, and he cannot wish for a better aſſiſtant than he will meet with in this necessary treatise.

Such is the ſtately ſtyle of Mr. Charles Carter, in which there is a magnificence not unsuitable to the grandeſt entertainments, a copiousness which may be assimulated with the London markets, in which all sorts of provisions are abundant, and a richness and flavour resembling the excellence of his own soups and sauces. Muſt we not admire his communicative liberality, when like Aristotle he unlocks the treasures of science to all who are willing to learn, and like Socrates brings philosophy from the concealment of schools into the open walks of men.[7] How judicious is he in wishing that gentlemen themselves should attain to some knowledge in the noble art of Cookery, that they may learn to diſtinguish and set a due value on its skilful professors. And indeed it is well known that many of the French men of fashion are pretty good proficients in Cookery, of which I think full as well as of the ſtudies of some of the same rank in England, in boxing, and driving a coach. With what a patriotic warmth does he assert the

[7] Cf. *Life of J.*, 1. 252, where Boswell uses the same phrase to contrast the simplicity of Socrates to the philosophical expressions of Johnson. *The Spectator* contrasts the powers of Socrates in bringing philosophy from heaven to mankind, to his own purpose of bringing it to the tea-tables (Number 10).

Boswell's carelessness about the technical proprieties of composition is noticeable in this essay. The last paragraph of Mr. Carter's lucubrations and the following passage of Boswell's own text show a total disregard for the question mark, and Carter's phrase *to set forth to advantage* was, in the magazine text, *to to set forth*. Boswell left no correction for any of these defects.

preference of the English taſte in cookery, to that of the French. And how admirably does he contrive to associate his labours with those of the Generals of our armies, and our Ambassadors to foreign courts. Had he been a man of more general reading, he might with some plausibility have ascribed to his noble art some share of the success of his illuſtrious maſters. For he would have found in Prior's almanack the important influence of foods upon the dispositions and conduct of men, exhibited with much fancy, and Pope would have told him that the reason why Cæsar did not complete his conqueſt of Britain, was perhaps that Cæsar had not dined.[8] A finer ridicule upon pedigree, and particularly the male line, cannot be imagined than Mr. Carter's boaſt of "a long race of predecessors, all practical male cooks of some eminence."

However juſt Horace's reflexion is, that no man lives contented with his own profession, but thinks those happier who are in different occupations,[9] a reflexion founded in the reſtlessness of

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[8] Boswell misquotes from memory the *Moral Essays*, I. 129:

> Muſt then at once (the character to save)
> The plain rough Hero turn a crafty Knave?
> Alas! in truth the man but chang'd his mind,
> Perhaps was sick, in love, or had not din'd.
> Ask why from Britain Cæsar would retreat?
> Cæsar himself might whisper he was beat.

On the influence of foods upon disposition and conduct, cf. the opinion of Rousseau (*Nouv. Hél.*, 4. 10):

> Le laitage et le sucre sont un des goûts naturels du sexe, et comme le symbole de l'innocence et de la douceur qui font son plus aimable ornement. Les hommes, au contraire, recherchent en général les saveurs fortes et les liqueurs spiritueuses, aliments plus convenables à la vie active et laborieuse que la nature leur demande; et quand ces divers goûts viennent à s'alterer et se confondre, c'eſt une marque presque infaillible du mélange désordonné des sexes. En effet, j'ai remarqué qu'en France, où les femmes vivent sans cesse avec les hommes, elles ont tout à fait perdu le goût du laitage, les hommes beaucoup celui du vin; et qu'en Angleterre, où les deux sexes sont moins confondus, leur goût propre s'eſt mieux conservé. En général, je pense qu'on pourroit souvent trouver quelque indice du caractère des gens dans le choix des aliments qu'ils préfèrent. Les Italiens, qui vivent beaucoup d'herbages, sont efféminés et mous. Vous autre Anglois, grands mangeurs de viande, avez dans vos inflexibles vertus quelque chose de dur et qui tient de la barbarie. Le Suisse, naturellement froid, paisible et simple, mais violent et emporté dans la colère, aime à la fois l'un et l'autre aliment, et boit du laitage et du vin. Le François, souple et changeant, vit de tous les mets et se plie à tous les caractères.

[9] *Sat.*, I. 1. 1.

> Qui fit, Maecenas, ut nemo, quam sibi sortem
> Seu ratio dederit, seu fors objecerit, illa
> Contentus vivat, laudet diversa sequentes . . . .

See also *Epist.*, I. 14. Boswell's remark upon the restlessness of human nature is repeated in *Hyp.* 19; cf. note 3 to that essay.

human nature, and the impossibility of our being satisfied with our present state, there is no such preference in point of importance. For *there* our pride strikes in, and though a man may think his neighbour's profession happier, he thinks his own more respectable. Gay makes "all professions be-rogue one another."[10] Even this is pretty true. But it is certain that all professions in any degree upon the same line, hold one another in lower estimation than themselves. There is what the French call an *esprit du corps*, a desire to raise a high notion of that class of discriminated mankind in which we have placed ourselves, and of which therefore we ourselves are participant of the credit or contempt.[11] A stronger instance of that happy delusive partiality cannot be figured, than the self-importance of a Cook as exemplified in Mr. Carter. A gallant commander, who has endured the scorching heat of an African sun, in the service of his country, could not be prouder than Mr. Carter is of having broiled in a kitchen in the service of his noble masters. Nor could the most ingenious and judicious

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[10] *Beggar's Opera*, 1. 1, Air 1:

> Through all the employments of life
> Each neighbour abuses his brother;
> Whore and rogue they call husband and wife;
> All professions be-rogue one another.

According to Lewis Melville (*Life and Letters of John Gay*, 1921), this song should be attributed not to Gay, but to Lord Chesterfield.

[11] Cf. *The Rambler*, 9:

> It is justly remarked by Horace that howsoever every man may complain occasionally of the hardships of his condition, he is seldom willing to change it for any other on the same level: for whether it be that he, who follows an employment, made choice of it at first on account of its suitableness to his inclination; or that when accident, or the determination of others, have placed him in a particular station, he, by endeavouring to reconcile himself to it, gets the custom of viewing it only on the fairest side; or whether every man thinks that class to which he belongs the most illustrious, merely because he has honoured it with his name; it is certain that, whatever be the reason, most men have a very strong and active prejudice in favour of their own vocation, always working upon their minds, and influencing their behaviour.

For the first part of the discussion, see also *The Rambler*, 45:

> Every man recounts the inconveniencies of his own station, and thinks those of any other less, because he has not felt them.

It is possible that Boswell read this latter essay of Johnson, or called it to mind, in finishing *Hyp.* 18, and went on to compose *Hyp.* 19 as a further development of the ideas with which he concludes here; the topics which spread through the two *Hypochondriacks*—the envy of others' states and interests and the inevitable succession of change—are considered together in *The Rambler*, 45.

author be vainer of his literary compositions of his culinary mixtures, than Mr. Carter is of his.[12] A Cook it has always appeared to me might be less liable to pride and vanity than any other artist. The poet can say, *Exegi monumentum ære perennius;* "I have erected to myself a monument more lasting than brass."[12a] The painter, *Pingo eternitati;* "I paint for eternity."[13] The builder may exult in the prospect, that what he is erecting shall be entire after the revolution of ages. But of the Cook we may say, *Vanus dat ruitura labor,* "Vain is his labour, since its effects are so perishing."[14] He knows that his works are destined to immediate destruction, nay, that their only use or pleasure arises from their being destroyed. Yet we see how vain a cook can be; and let us rejoice that it is so ordered, that the different parts of civilized society, by which so good a whole is produced, are performed with so much complacency.[15]

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[12] The original of this sentence is given exactly.

[12a] Horace, *Carm.*, 3. 30. 1. *Æra* for *ære* was never corrected by Boswell.

[13] Plutarch, *Pericles*, 13. 2—the remark of Zeuxis to Agatharchus, who was boasting of his rapidity of execution. It is quoted also in *The Spectator*, 52.

Boswell used this and the previously noted quotation together in one of his essays on *The Profession of a Player* (London Magazine 39. 469):

> Colley Cibber justly regrets, that the talents of the greatest actor die with him; . . . . in that respect the poet and painter have the advantage over him: for the painter can say, *pingo æternitati,* I paint for eternity!—The poet, *exegi monumentum aere perennius,* I have finished a monument more lasting than brass! These were the expressions of an ancient painter, and of an ancient poet; and they were expressions by no means absurd or extravagant, for the works of a painter and poet are transmitted down from age to age with successive admiration: it is not so with the player: his talents, by which multitudes have been affected, leave no trace behind them.

See also *Letters of B.*, 1. 207, where Boswell refers to Johnson's *Tour to the Western Islands* as a *monumentum perenne.*

[14] Martial, *Epigr.*, 1. 88 . 4.

[15] The complacency arising from keeping within one's given sphere in society would seem properly a part of the scheme of subordination applauded by Johnson and Boswell (cf. *Hyp.* 19), but there are indications that Johnson did not invariably expect it; cf. the note of Dr. Brocklesby's conversation with Johnson and Boswell on March 30, 1783:

> S. J. maintained against Boswell that knowledge should be universally taught, because no man was sorry that he had acquired knowledge or wished to unbare (?) the Genius given Him and the Ground must always be tilled, and the conveniences of life manufactured, but it was not fair to restrict any Sett of Men to tilling the Ground and making Clothes &c.—Genius should have a fair Chance whenever it was born—it was not born Every Day. . . . . (*Letters of J.*, 2. 437, *App. B.*)

No. XIX. April 1779.

[ON SUBORDINATION IN GOVERNMENT]

Liscus proponit esse nonnullos quorum auctoritas apud plebem plurimum valeat, qui privati plus possint quam ipsi magistratus: bos seditiosa atque improba oratione multitudinem deterrere.—CÆSAR.[1]

"Liscus discovered that there were some persons whose authority amongst the common people was great, and who in private stations could do more than magistrates themselves. That these by seditious and wicked discourse alarmed the multitude."

THAT government is absolutely necessary for the preservation and happiness of society, has I believe never been controverted even by the wildest and most turbulent political visionaries. To be in a constant state of uncertainty and fluctuation, as to every thing around us, is what no individuals whose understandings are sound would choose. But when such a state is considered as belonging to an aggregate of numbers, confusion and destruction of all that is valuable are proportionally augmented, and if we think justly we shrink with horrour from its contemplation.[2]

That there should be many varieties in the forms of government in different countries, is not wonderful, when we reflect on the varieties of the human mind in every other respect. And that

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[1] *De Bello Gall.*, 1. 17. 2.

[2] This essay is a compound of Boswell's own opinions and those of Johnson, expressed either in conversation or in writings; the closeness of many of the parallels would perhaps suggest that Boswell is writing from notes, but I believe the true case to be that this subject of subordination in government is one of the favorite topics between him and Johnson, and that his constant thoughts on the subject have registered various good points and catch-phrases in his mind. Cf. *Hyp.* 36, 38, 64.

For the general introduction of the uncertainties which would exist without government, cf. *Life of J.*, 2. 118:

[Johnson said] "Providence has wisely ordered that the more numerous men are, the more difficult it is for them to agree in any thing, and so they are governed. There is no doubt, that if the poor should reason, 'We'll be poor no longer, we'll make the rich take their turn,' they could easily do it, were it not that they can't agree. So the common soldiers, though so much more numerous than their officers, are governed by them for the same reason."

See also the notes for *Adventurer*, 45, in Johnson's notebooks, (*Life of J.*, 1. 239–40), and that essay; the reference to the "useful and agreeable" system of subordination, *Hyp.* 62; and *Letters of B.*, 1. 213; 2. 273, 284, 309, 310.

changes in the forms of government in nations should sometimes happen, is easily accounted for by the restlessness of mankind, who are seldom easy for any length of time; so far short does actual satisfaction come of what is ideal.[3] We wish to try something different from what we experience at the time, and, like one upon a bed of sickness flatter ourselves that mere change of posture will give us some relief.[4] In the worthy and humane Mr. Hanway's seventh letter to Sir Charles Bunbury, upon the improvement of the imprisonment of criminals, there is this striking remark, which though it cannot be new, is from one, who has travelled and thought as much as he has done, of more weight than common: "I have lived under many kinds of government, and seen and felt various kinds of misery; and I have learnt that misery is the lot of man. It is the degree of it against which we are to guard."[5]

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[3] Cf. Johnson to Bennet Langton, *Life of J.*, 1. 390 (and note):

I know not any thing more pleasant, or more instructive, than to compare experience with expectation, or to register from time to time the difference between idea and reality. It is by this kind of observation that we grow daily less liable to be disappointed.

Boswell's observations on human restlessness in this essay are an echo of the latter part of *Hyp.* 18—an instance of the way he links his papers.

[4] Cf. *The Rambler*, 45:

Whoever feels great pain, naturally hopes for ease from change of posture: he changes it, and finds himself equally tormented.

[5] I am unable to find any such work even listed as by Jonas Hanway. It is possible that these letters are included in one of two miscellanies mentioned in the obituary notices of the Gentleman's Magazine following Hanway's death: *Reflections, Essays, and Meditations on Life and Religion, with . . . . 28 Letters, written occasionally, on several subjects* (2 vols., 1767); Fifteen Letters on *The Neglect of the effectual Separation of Prisoners, &c., the Cause of the Frequent Thefts and Violences Committed* (1785). These late letters may have been reprints of early compositions. Very little is known of Hanway's works, which were largely tracts and letters in the newspapers.

He had spent the early part of his life, which extended from 1712 to 1786, in travel as a man of business; he published in 1753 an account of his peregrinations—*Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea, with a Journal of Travels through Russia into Persia and back through Russia, Germany, and Holland.* The rest of his existence was spent in humanitarian causes of various kinds; he was interested in the welfare of orphans, magdalens, and sailors, and promoted asylums for them, as well as offering suggestions for improving prisons and police systems and carrying on a campaign against tea-drinking, in which he fell afoul of Johnson (cf. *Life of J.*, Index under

Men of vigorous fancies which soar above the experience of life; or men of fretful tempers impatient of control, have in every age set themselves forward, under the specious denomination of *friends to liberty*. Sometimes they have chosen to call themselves *lovers of liberty*, and this last title I think the best for them. Because, in my opinion, as we read of those who were "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,"[6] these will be found to be lovers of liberty more than lovers of government. The love of pleasure is not inconsistent with the love of God; nor the love of liberty with the love of government. But excess in either case of what ought to be subordinate will be reprobated by the sound divine and the rational politician.

For my own part, after having read a good deal, and observed more; after having, in the heat of youth, glowed with the animation of resistance, to enjoy which we are too ready to imagine grievances,[7] and entertain apprehensions of oppression by those

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Hanway). In 1762 he published *Eight Letters to the Duke of Newcastle* on the custom of giving tips to servants. He is perhaps remembered best by his eccentricities, of which not the least in his own day was his insistence on carrying that new-fangled device, an umbrella, despite the jeers of all London's street boys and chairmen.

Sir Charles Bunbury, brother of the caricaturist, H. W. Bunbury (who married Goldsmith's "Little Comedy," Miss Horneck), was a member of *The Club* (*Life of J.*, 2. 314).

[6] *2 Tim.*, 3. 4.

[7] This is what Johnson calls (*Life of Lyttelton*) "something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes forward." (See also the opening paragraphs of his *Life of Akenside*, and his praise of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, in *Life of J.*, 3. 427.) Boswell never wholly conquered this romantic attitude. He announces that he has a "most independent spirit," and "cannot bear control" (*Letters of B.*, 1. 11), and begins a youthful letter to Temple with the statement that he would have answered it sooner "were it not for an antipathy at established rules which I have not yet altogether got the better of" (*Letters of B.*, 1. 25); when writing the *Life* he adds a note to Johnson's exposition of natural rights under monarchy (*Life of J.*, 1. 491):

> This generous sentiment, which he uttered with great fervour, struck me exceedingly, and stirred my blood to that pitch of fancied resistance, the possibility of which I am glad to keep in mind, but to which I trust I shall never be forced.

The bagpipes had somewhat the same effect!—see *Hyp.* 3 n. 2. Contrast to all these statements, *Hyp.* 64, which in rejecting change or innovation supports the sober tone of this essay.

who rule over us, as Don Quixote fancied foes for the pleasure of combating them, I feel myself more and more convinced of the excellence of monarchy, limited and tempered as it is in our fortunate constitution.[8]

If we would judge liberally of one another, we must make a due allowance for the effect of association of ideas. A Tory is apt to look upon a Whig as a vulgar ruffian; and a Whig to look upon a Tory as a genteel slave. Yet Whigs have possessed the spirit of ancient Romans; and Tories have with noble firmness opposed unreasonable encroachments by the crown, to support the just rights of which, their lives were devoted.

Let us with candour and good humour reason together; and may I hope that if this paper shall fall into the hands of a Whig, he will not tear it in pieces, or throw it into the fire, till he has read it; and perhaps not even then.

It was well said by one of the ancients to a declaimer for republicanism. "Try it in your own family." That is a home argument if I may use the expression, which "makes Tories of us all."[9] And I beg that my readers may cast their thoughts around amongst their acquaintance, and see if any Whig wishes to see the

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[8] This is an instance of Boswell's having convictions identical with those of Johnson—one of the coincidences which cause many persons to believe that Boswell drew all his notions from his friend. Two years after the firm statements of this essay were written, Boswell took down a pronouncement on the same subject from Johnson as if it were his first definite consideration of the topic; his usual sincere humility before authority creates a deceptive air of dependence or thoughtlessness. See the notes for the year 1783 (*Life of J.*, 4. 136):

> One day, when I told him that I was a zealous Tory, but not enough, "according to knowledge," and should be obliged to him for "a reason," he was so candid, and expressed himself so well, that I begged of him to repeat what he had said and I wrote down as follows:—
>
> OF TORY AND WHIG.
>
> "A wise Tory and a wise Whig, I believe, will agree. Their principles are the same, though their modes of thinking are different. A high Tory makes government unintelligible: it is lost in the clouds. A violent Whig makes it impracticable: he is for allowing so much liberty to every man, that there is not power enough to govern any man. The prejudice of the Tory is for establishment; the prejudice of the Whig is for innovation. A Tory does not wish to give more real power to Government; but that Government should have more reverence. . . ."

See also *Hyp.* 45 n. 4.

[9] The remark of Lycurgus (Plutarch, *Life of L.*, chap. 19). According to *The Spectator*, 189, the obedience of children is the type of proper subordina-

beautiful Utopian expansion of power within his own walls. A family to live in order and satisfaction must have a head to whose determination there is an ultimate appeal. Every nation is a large family composed of small families, as a small family is of individuals; and one supreme power is as necessary for the good of the greater society, as for the good of the lesser.

The antiquated treatise of Sir Robert Filmer has fallen into too much contempt, from the shock which the sovereignty of this country received by that great change, which is justified by necessity.[10] His zeal for kingly government was indeed extreme, so as to expose him to some degree of ridicule; but surely not to such virulent resentment as bursts from a hot-headed Whig in Dodsley's Collection, who consigns the honest knight to damnation.

> "Bow, Filmer, bow to Hell's infernal throne
> "And bid thy fellow damn'd confess each groan."[11]

Filmer certainly meant well. He wrote from his conscience; and there is in his book more learning than men even of good education commonly have. But he seems to have been so superstitiously addicted to monarchy, as to make no allowance whatever for

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tion; see also numbers 120, 181. On one occasion Johnson endeavored to make the republican Mrs. Macaulay "try it in her own family" in another sense (*Life of J.*, 1. 518):

"I consider myself as acting a part in the great system of society, and I do to others as I would have them to do to me. I would behave to a nobleman as I should expect he would behave to me, were I a nobleman and he Sam. Johnson. Sir, there is one Mrs. Macaulay in this town, a great republican. One day when I was at her house, I put on a very grave countenance, and said to her, 'Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, Madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen, your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us.' I thus, Sir, shewed her the absurdity of the levelling doctrine. She has never liked me since."

"Makes Tories of us all" is probably an adaptation of *Hamlet*, 3. 1. 84.

[10] Boswell alludes to the "glorious revolution" of 1688, which brought William of Orange to the throne as a "limited monarch." Cf. *Hyp.* 49, 64; *Life of J.*, 3. 4; 4. 196; *Hebr.*, 230; and *Letters of B.*, 2. 284:

What is more, I am happy in my good old principles, could but that sad *necessary shock*, the *Revolution*, be forgotten.

[11] Boswell here misquotes from memory, *An Epistle to the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Cornbury*, in Dodsley's *Collection of Poems . . . . by several Hands* (5th ed., 2. 182). He corrects it himself, however, by a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 20: "in the two verses quoted . . . . , for *infernal* read *tremendous*, and for *confess* read *suppress*."

necessity of change. His illustration of his favourite system by that of patriarchal authority is well delineated. But it would have been as well without the particularity of Judaism. Had he taken a family, or tribe in general, as the prototype, it would have been better. The figure which he draws would have disgusted fewer persons, had it been without the Hebrew beard.[12]

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[12] Sir Robert Filmer (d. 1653), knighted at the beginning of the reign of Charles I, was roused to literary activity in his middle age by the woes of that monarch. Aside from the work quoted, he wrote *The Freeholder's Grand Inquest touching our Sovereign Lord the King, Anarchy of a Limited and Mixed Monarchy, Patriarcha,* and *The Power of Kings* (all composed *ca.* 1648, although the last two were published in 1680), and *Observations upon Mr. Hobbes's Leviathan, Mr. Milton against Salmasius, and H. Grotius De Jure belli et pacis* . . . . (1652). Locke singled out Filmer as the chief exponent of the theory of Divine Right, and attacked him in the first part of *Two Treatises on Government* (1689).

Boswell is quoting Filmer's unsigned pamphlet, *Observations upon Aristotle's Politiques, touching Forms of Government. Together with Directions for Obedience to Governours in dangerous and doubtfull Times* (1652). It is in the preface that the Hebrew beard is most lengthy:

> It is not probable that any sure direction of the beginning of government can be found either in *Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Polybius,* or in any other of the Heathen Authours, who were ignorant of the manner of the creation of the world: we must not neglect the Scriptures and search in Philosophers for the grounds of Dominion and Property, which are the main principles of government and justice. The first government in the world was Monarchicall in the father of all flesh. *Adam* being commanded to multiply, and people the earth and subdue it, and having dominion given him over all creatures, was thereby the Monarch of the whole world, none of his posterity had any right to possesse anything, but by his grant or permission, or by succession from him: the *earth,* saith the Psalmist, *hath he given to the children of men:* which shows the title comes from fatherhood. There never was any such thing as an independent multitude, who at first had a naturall right to a community: this is but a fiction, or a fancy of too many in these days, who please themselves in running after the opinions of Philosophers and Poets, to finde out such an originall of government, as might premise them some title to liberty, to the great scandall of Christianity, and bringing in of Atheisme, since a naturall freedome of mankinde cannot be supposed without the deniall of the creation of *Adam.* . . . . Adam was the father, King and Lord over his family: a son, a subject, and a servant, or a slave, were one and the same thing at first, the father had power to dispose, or sell his children or servants. . . . . I cannot learn that either the Hebrew, Greek, or Latine have any proper and originall word for a Tyrant or a slave, it seems these are names of later invention, and taken up in disgrace of Monarchicall government. . . . .
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> That there is a ground in Nature for Monarchie; Aristotle himselfe affirmeth, saying, *the first Kings were fathers of families;* as for any ground of any other form of government, there hath been none yet alleged, but a supposed naturall freedome of mankinde; the proofe whereof I finde none do undertake, but onely beg it to be granted: wee finde the government of Gods own people, varied under the severall titles of Patriarchs, Captains, Judges, and Kings, but in all these the supreme power rested still in one person onely: we no where finde any supreme power given to the people, or to a multitude in Scripture, or ever exercised by them. The people were never the *Lord's annointed,* nor called *Gods,* nor crowned, nor had the title of *nursing fathers. Gen. 35 . 11.* The supreme power being an indivisible beam of Majesty, cannot be divided among, or setled upon a multitude. God would have it fixed in one person,

As to the *Jus Divinum*, "the divine right," the error I think is in assuming as a reality what is only an illustration. That the government of the universe itself is monarchical is no doubt a magnificent example to all nations; and there can be no doubt that a perfectly wise and virtuous king with unlimitted power would make the best government. But as kings themselves are not exempted from the passions and infirmities of human nature, it becomes requisite that they should have the aid of other minds, and the checks of other powers to be exercised occasionally.

Let mankind devise in speculation, and even actually constitute any popular form of government that they please, we find that in all times of difficulty and danger, that which the Romans avowedly did when they chose a dictator never fails to take place when the society is resolved to do its best. The general power is concentrated in one man. We know in our own time that the Corsicans, a small nation, whose eminent though ineffectual struggles for freedom have made them renowned amongst the European states; we know that in that nation where liberty was adored, the supreme power was in fact exercised by their general; and while they threw off a foreign yoke, they submitted with willing confidence to decisive government at home.[13]

Subordination is in my mind not only necessary for order, but conducive to the felicity of society. I consider society like a grand musical composition, in which there must be a wide compass and gradation of notes to produce pleasure. The equality of men, for which some have argued, would be a dull monotony, a wearisome repetition of the same notes, varied only by the sharps and flats of natural tempers and dispositions. Whereas in a monarchy with all the gradations of nobility, gentry, citizens, in short, all the numerous ranks of society, there is a delightful entertainment,

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not sometimes in one part of the people, and sometimes in another; and sometimes, and that for the most part, nowhere, as when the Assembly is dissolved, it must rest in the aire, or in the walls of the Chamber, where they were Assembled.

If there were any thing like a popular government among Gods people, it was about the time of the Judges, when there was *no King in Israel;* for they had then some small shew of government, such as it was, but it was so poor and beggerly, that the Scripture brands it with this note, that *every man did what was right in his own eyes, because there was no King in Israel;* it is not said, because there was no government, but because there was no King, it seems no government, but the government of a King in the judgement of the Scriptures could restrain men from doing as they listed; where every man doth what he pleaseth, it may be truly said there is no government.

[13] See *Hyp.* 15 n. 10.

while infinite changes of melody and harmony are continually perceived, and where the pleasure of hope may be freely indulged in the possibilities of rising to wealth, splendour, and honours. In a republick, men grow selfishly lazy in the consciousness of their independency. Whereas in a monarchy there is a reciprocation of active benevolence from the highest to the lowest. The great have the pleasure of humane condescension and respect, their inferiors have the pleasure of receiving kindness and exerting gratitude.[14]

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[14] Cf. *Life of J.*, 1. 472:

"Sir, I am a friend to subordination, as most conducive to the happiness of society. There is a reciprocal pleasure in governing and being governed. . . . ."

and *ibid.*, 1. 512:

"How shall we determine the proportion of intrinsick merit? Were that to be the only distinction amongst mankind, we should soon quarrel about the degrees of it. Were all distinctions abolished, the strongest would not long acquiesce, but would endeavour to obtain a superiority by their bodily strength. But, Sir, as subordination is very necessary for society, and contensions for superiority very dangerous, mankind, that is to say, all civilized nations, have settled it upon a plain invariable principle. A man is born to hereditary rank; or his being appointed to certain offices, gives him a certain rank. Subordination tends greatly to human happiness. Were we all upon an equality, we should have no other enjoyment than mere animal pleasure."

In chapter 24 of *Rasselas*, however, Johnson adopts another view:

"There can be no pleasure," said [Rasselas], "equal to that of feeling at once the joy of thousands all made happy by wise administration. Yet, since by the law of subordination this sublime delight can be in one nation but the lot of one, it is surely reasonable to think that there is some satisfaction more popular and accessible, and that millions can hardly be subjected to the will of a single man, only to fill his particular breast with incommunicable content."

In 1772 (*Life of J.*, 2. 204), Johnson maintained this idea in serious conversation, and Boswell

argued warmly for the old feudal system. Sir Alexander [Macdonald] opposed it, and talked of the pleasure of seeing all men free and independent. JOHNSON. "I agree with Mr. Boswell that there must be a high satisfaction in being a feudal lord; but we are to consider, that we ought not to wish to have a number of men unhappy for the satisfaction of one."—I maintained that numbers, namely, the vassals or followers, were not unhappy; for that there was a reciprocal satisfaction between the Lord and them: he being kind in his authority over them; they being respectful and faithful to him.

During the tour to the Hebrides, Boswell again "regretted the decay of respect for men of family," and announced his belief that "mankind were happier in the ancient state of subordination, than they are in the modern state of independency" (*Hebr.*, 120). Johnson in answer drew his favorite contrast between the feudal vassal of old times and the happy ordinary man of his own day, and Boswell in defense cited "the happiness of the French in their subordination, by the reciprocal benevolence and attachment between the great and those in lower rank." In a late letter to Temple he says of the French revolution (which he

That implicit trust should be reposed in a monarch I certainly do not maintain. The superior excellence of the British constitution is, that our monarch is for ever reminded that there are other guardians of it. But although I am sensible that our monarchy cannot be without error like the divine government, I confess that I cannot approve an unceasing violence of opposition producing a conflict resembling the Manichean system of two divine powers, one good and the other evil. Let there be centinels upon the constitution. But let them do their duty with manly vigilance, not with miserable jealousy.[15]

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calls "an intellectual earthquake, a whirlwind, a mad insurrection without any immediate cause")—"I do not mean that the French ought not to have a *Habeas Corpus* Act. But I knowing nothing more they wanted." (*Letters of B.*, 2. 386.)

Birkbeck Hill notes (*Hebr.*, 121) that up to 1784 there was disagreement among observers as to the happiness of the French; it is very possible therefore that Boswell was speaking only from his own observation of French life in the cities, or that he was depending upon the patronizing sentimentalities of M. Wolmar and Julie in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, 5. 3:

> Chaque homme apporte en naissant un caractère, un génie et des talents qui sont lui propres. Ceux qui sont destinés à vivre dans la simplicité champêtre n'ont pas besoin, pour être heureux, du developpement de leurs facultés, et leurs talents enfouis sont comme les mines d'or du Valais que le bien public ne permet pas qu'on exploite. ... N'instruisez point l'enfant du villageois, car il ne lui convient pas d'être instruit.

See also *ibid.*, 4. 10; 5. 2, where happiness is placed before, and contrasted to, talents, and is clearly regarded as a matter of keeping close to earth.

Considering these ideas, it is much to Boswell's credit that he espoused the cause of the American colonies against Johnson; he objects to the tyrannous behavior of the English government in his *Letters*, 1. 213—

> That I am a Tory, a lover of power and monarchy, and a discourager of much liberty in the people, I avow. But it is not clear to me that our colonies are completely our subjects.

See also *ibid.*, 2. 273, 275, 284, and 2. 309, where he is careful to draw a distinction between a *limited monarch* and a *despotick ministry*.

[15] Cf. *Life of J.*, 1. 490:

> Goldsmith, as usual, endeavoured, with too much eagerness to *shine*, and disputed very warmly with Johnson against the well-known maxim of the British constitution, "the King can do no wrong"; affirming, that "what was morally false could not be politically true; and as the King might, in the exercise of his regal power, command and cause the doing of what was wrong, it certainly might be said, in sense and in reason, that he could do wrong." JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to consider, that in our constitution, according to its true principles, the King is at the head; he is supreme; he is above every thing, and there is no power by which he can be tried. Therefore it is, Sir, that we hold the King can do no wrong; that whatever may happen to be wrong in government may not be above our reach, by being ascribed to Majesty. Redress is always to be had against oppression, by punishing the immediate agents. The King, though he should command, cannot force a Judge to condemn a man unjustly; therefore it is the Judge whom we prosecute and punish. Political institutions are

As all kings will be generally inclined to do what is for the good of those over whom they reign, because it is their own intereſt that their subjects should prosper, I wish that a reverence for majeſty were more generally cultivated. For we muſt all feel the bad consequences of that abatement of reverence for authority which is now so prevalent, that a great observer of mankind said lately, I fear with much truth, that "No man has now the same power that he once had, except a gaoler."[16] Governed we muſt be; and it is doubtless more agreeable to be governed by authority than by force, by a father whom we love and venerate, than by a maſter whom we only fear.

There is, I am sorry to say, an almoſt total extinction of one noble principle, which in the laſt age was to be found amongſt all but men loſt to decency and virtue. I mean the principle of *loyalty*. However old fashioned this principle may be at present, it is a worthy principle in whatever view it is regarded. But even at court, though I see much external *obeisance*, I do not find congenial sentiments to warm my heart;[17] and except when I have the conversation of a very few select friends, I am never so well,

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formed upon the consideration of what will moſt frequently tend to the good of the whole, although now and then exceptions may occur. Thus it is better in general that a nation should have a supreme legislative power, although it may at times be abused. And then, Sir, there is this consideration, that *if the abuse be enormous, Nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political syſtem.*" I mark this animated sentence . . . . as a noble inſtance of that truly dignified spirit of freedom which ever glowed in his heart . . . . because he was at all times indignant againſt that false patriotism, that pretended love of freedom, that unruly reſtlessness, which is inconsiſtent with the ſtable authourity of any good government.

See also *ibid.*, 2. 83, 195, and *The Rambler*, 50.

[16] Cf. *Life of J.*, 3. 297 (1778):

[Johnson] burſt forth, "Subordination is sadly broken down in this age. *No man, now, has the same authourity which his father had,—except a gaoler.* . . . . There is a general relaxation of reverence. No son depends upon his father as in former times. Paternity used to be considered as of itself a great thing, which had a right to many claims."

Contrast his remarks on the Scotch peasantry, *Letters of J.*, 1. 263. See *Hyp.* 57 n. 14 for the disruption of subordination through the rapid rise of wealthy men.

[17] Cf. Boswell's own sentiments, *Hebr.*, 232:

However convinced I am of the juſtice of that principle, which holds allegiance and protection to be reciprocal, I do . . . . acknowledge, that I am not satisfied with the cold sentiment which would confine the exertions of the subject within the ſtrict line of duty. I would have every breaſt animated with the fervour of loyalty; with that generous attachment which delights in doing somewhat more than is required, and makes "service perfect freedom."

He quotes his own phrasing in the *Life of J.*, 3. 128:

as when I sit down to a dish of coffee in the Cocoa-Tree[18] sacred of old to loyalty, look around me to men of ancient families, and please myself with the consolatory thought that there is perhaps more good in the nation than I know.

As a specimen of the principles of the laſt age, I shall quote some lines by Mr. *Edward Ravenscroft* in a prologue prefixed to his alteration of *Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus.*

"Leave your provoking Cæsar and his frowns,
Leave crossing birthrights and disposing crowns.
Leave England's ancient glory so to wrong,
As naming princes with irreverent tongue:
Though foreigners and enemies they be,
Forget not what is due to majeſty.
Whilſt brutiſhly those titles we propha̓ne
The world does think we are turn'd Piſts again.
Conſider well and then you'll be, I hope,
So civiliſ'd as ſcarce to burn the pope.[19]

There is in this passage a liberality of thinking, and what may be properly called a gentlemanly spirit, which does Mr. Ravenscroft great honour. It may be said that it proves that what I am condemning in this age exiſted then. But it seldom happens that the objects of a poet's satire are very numerous. A few insolent writers or talkers might provoke what he has so well said. Besides it will not be disputed that want of reverence for superiors was not then common.

In the same gentleman's dedication of his play to Lord Arundel, there are very exalted sentiments of loyalty. After celebrating his patron and other lords for having ſtood the fire of persecution

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. . . . it will tend to propagate and increase that "fervour of *Loyalty,*" which in me, who boaſt of the name of TORY, is not only a principle, but a passion.

[18] A coffee-house frequented by the Tories; it gave its name to a club of Jacobites shortly before the Old Pretender's attempt to force his claims in 1715.

[19] Edward Ravenscroft (fl. 1671–1697) intended to become a lawyer, but after wiling hours of illness by writing a play, he did nothing else. The *Biographica Dramatica* calls him a "writer, or rather compiler of plays," since he imitated Molière, Spanish plays of intrigue, and the Italian *commedia dell' arte.* His *Titus Andronicus* was presented in 1678, and printed in 1687.

The irregular punctuation of the quotation is Boswell's; he left it uncorrected.

for their royal master,[20] he says, "Shine then, you noble sufferers, like a bright constellation round this sun of glory: Thus influenced shall the orbs of government move regular and in order like those above, till the three nations are convinced of their former mistakes, and rejoice to find that change which most they feared."

Cæsar, who in the course of his own illustrious life had opportunities to observe mankind in all situations, sets before us in a strong manner in the motto to this paper, the undoubted truth that somebody will always have authority over the multitude. Let all then who have a sincere regard for the happiness of society, unite their endeavours to promote such principles of subordination and loyalty, that this authority, instead of being usurped by seditious men, may remain with those to whom it belongs.

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[20] Henry Frederick, Baron Mowbray and Maltravers, third Earl of Arundel (1608–1652), was the second, but eldest surviving son of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel. The father, though loyal, had been no favorite with the king because of his plain dress and his hauteur, no less than his enmity to Buckingham, and the fact that he presided at the trial of Strafford. The son, though he married without the consent of the king, and was therefore imprisoned for a time, was an ardent adherent of the Stuarts; he voted against the bill for the attainder of Strafford, and in 1642 was one of the peers to sign a declaration of loyalty to the king, which was printed and circulated throughout the kingdom. At the death of his father in Padua in 1646, he succeeded as earl marshal of England and third earl of Arundel. His estate was in possession of Parliament, and he subsisted with great difficulty, his house being used by the council of state as a garrison. He was compensated in part for both.

No. XX. May 1779.

[ON SAVAGES & THE MODE]

Qualem te legimus teneri primordia mundi
Scribentem, aut partes animæ, talem
Cernimus & similes agnoscit pagina mores.—CLAUDIAN.[1]

"Such as observing travellers relate
"The modes of life in rude and savage ſtate
"(Wond'rous similitude!) the faithful page
"Shews the fine manners of this polish'd age."

FEW REMARKS which experience has reiterated and confirmed, are juſter than this, that extremes will meet. Politicians and hiſtorians have told us from book to book, and from age to age, that all communities or ſtates gradually rise from imperfect and coarse beginnings, till they attain to a certain degree of excellence and refinement; that then their progress is ſtopped, and inſtead of advancing farther, they, like Sysiphus's ſtone, roll back again into their original situation. This, all the records which we have of human society concur in proving to be true; though there are no certain rules by which we can tell with precision the fate of any particular community, the rise or declension of ſtates being slower or more rapid according to an infinite variety of circumſtances which it is impossible for our sagacity to foresee, so that we can here have nothing similar to aſtronomical calculations, which reſpect the heavenly bodies that move by certain fixed laws of their great Creator; nay we cannot have even that species of calculation in which some gameſters excel, by experiments upon numbers from which certain principles result. It is enough if we are sensible in general that the remark is juſt. For in this as in moſt other cases, life is too short for us to ſtay and examine with scrupulous nicety.

But it is not only in the hiſtory of ſtates that we are to look for that succession of little and great, rude and refined, which in the revolutions of ages presents the same appearances over and over again. Human nature may be said to be in perpetual rotation; and as old age is called a second childhood, we shall find that one

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[1] *Panegyricus dictus Manlio Theodoro Consuli*, 253–55. Boswell omits from the second line *per singula*, preceding *talem*.

mode of life which appears to be exceedingly distant from another, is only a renewal of what has formerly been; and that in reality, as extremes will meet, the more that it has receded from that point of the different mode from whence it set out, the nearer is it approaching to that very mode at another point.

The difference between the savage and civilized ſtate of man has been much considered of late years, since so many discoveries of diſtant regions and new nations have been made under his present majeſty's patronage, and since an eloquent writer upon the continent, and even a learned judge who is an author in our own island have thought fit to maintain the superiority of the former.[2]

For me, who love comfort a great deal better than paradox, such ingenious speculations are very ill suited, I cannot be of opinion that a man who lyes in the open air, or at beſt in a wretched hut, is happier than a man who has a good warm convenient house; that a man who does not know whether he shall have a dinner tomorrow or not, and certainly cannot have it, but by fatigue, which perhaps he may not be able to undergo without great uneaſiness, is happier than a man who knows that he can command dinners and choice of dinners for many days; and above all I cannot be of opinion that a man who has such a scarcity of

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[2] On the fad for the simple life of nature, see Introduction, III . 1. Boswell alludes to Rousseau and James Burnet, Lord Monboddo (1714–1799), so called from his position as Lord of Session. In his *Ancient Metaphysics* (1779–1799) and *The Origin and Progress of Language* (1773), he traced the gradual elevation of man from an animal state to the social, which he conceived as a natural process determined by "the necessities of human life." See *Hebr.*, 416; *Letters of J.*, 1. 233; and *Life of J.*, 2. 83–85, where the two enthusiasts for simplicity are contrasted:

Johnson. ". . . . The savages have no bodily advantages beyond those of civilized men. They have not better health; and as to care or mental uneasiness, they are not above it, but below it, like bears. No, Sir, you are not to talk such paradox. . . . . It cannot entertain, far less can it inſtruct. Lord Monboddo, one of your Scotch Judges, talked a great deal of such nonsense. I suffered *him*; but I will not suffer *you*." Boswell. "But, Sir, does not Rousseau talk such nonsense?" Johnson. "True, Sir, but Rousseau *knows* he is talking nonsense, and laughs at the world for ſtaring at him." Boswell. "How so, Sir?" Johnson. "Why, Sir, a man who talks nonsense so well, muſt know that he is talking nonsense. But I am *afraid* . . . . Monboddo does *not* know that he is talking nonsense."

For other entries regarding Monboddo's eccentricities of simplicity, see Birkbeck Hill's note to this passage, and *ibid.*, 2. 169; 3. 191; *Hebr.*, 50–51, 87, 92, 126, 376.

From a contemporary print

The Sweet Simplicity of Nature

ideas that they may be almoſt literally counted, is happier than a man who is possessed of that rich ſtore of ideas which civilized life affords, and consequently has so large a portion of intellectual enjoyment.[3] And I muſt confess that my opinion is somewhat influenced by the consideration that if the savage life be truly so much preferable to the civilized life; it is a felicity which may very easily be obtained. Neither money nor intereſt are requisite. A man may betake himself to the woods and wilds whenever he pleases. "*Noctes atqúe dies patet janua*—The road to bliss is open night and day."[4]—Yet neither of these philosophers nor any of

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[3] See also *Hyp.* 8, 17, 24, 40, 52. Here Boswell agrees with Johnson; cf. *Letters of J.*, 1. 263, on Raarsa in the Hebrides:

> The traveller wanders through a naked desart, ... and now and then finds a heap of loose ſtones and turf in a cavity between rocks, where a being born with all those powers which education expands, and all those sensations which culture refines, is condemned to shelter itself from the wind and the rain. Philosophers there are who try to make themselves believe that this life is happy; but they believe it only while they are saying it, and never yet convinced a single mind; he, whom want of words or images sunk into silence, ſtill thought, as he thought before, that privation of pleasure can never please, and that content is not to be much envied, when it has no other principle than ignorance of good.
>
> This gloomy tranquillity, which some call fortitude, and others wisdom, was, I believe, for a long time to be very frequently found in these dens of poverty.

Cf. the print, "Boswell on His Native Heath," in Vol. 2 of *The Hypochondriack*; *Life of J.*, 4. 202, and *Hebr.*, 333:

> We looked at a small hut. . . . . There was but one bed for all the family, and the hut was very smoky. When he came out, he said to me, "*Et hoc secundum sententiam philoſophorum eſt esse beatus.*" Boswell. "The philosophers, when they placed happiness in a cottage, supposed cleanliness and no smoke." Johnson. "Sir, they did not think about either."

See also Johnson's admirable satire on the philosophers who teach "to live according to nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impressed" (*Rasselas*, chap. 22), and his bitter picture of "pastoral simplicity" (*ibid.*, chap. 19):

> [The shepherds] were so rude and ignorant, ... that very little could be learned from them. But it was evident that their hearts were cankered with discontent; that they considered themselves as condemned to labor for the luxury of the rich, and looked up with ſtupid malevolence toward those that were placed above them.

In his earlier years, Boswell was frequently "in the humour of wishing to retire to a desart" (*Life of J.*, 2. 86, in 1769); see his *Letters*, 1. 98 (to Temple, 1767):

> You are tempted to join Rousseau in preferring the savage ſtate. I am so too at times. When jaded with business or when tormented with the passions of civilized life, I could fly to the woods, nay I could [be] the whinſton on the face of a mountain, were it possible for me to be conscious of it and to brave the elements by glorious insensibility. But these are the sallies of desperation.

Later, he feels the same impulse from time to time, but usually suppresses it or disguises his interest in it; see *Hyp.* 9 n. 5, and *Life of J.*, 3. 57; 4. 356.

[4] Adapted from Virgil, *Aen.* 6 . 127.

their disciples, so far as I have heard, have embraced the happiness in their reach.

The civilized life which I oppose to savage life, is that rational, temperate, orderly, and well cultivated state of existence which a great proportion of mankind enjoy. But my readers will start when I tell them that it has often occurred to me, that there is a great similarity between the two extremes of savage life and that highly estimated state of being which may be called very fine life. Yet I do not despair of illustrating my proposition with so much success that even the finest of my readers, though shuddering with disgust at the idea of a savage, shall confess the relation; as Horace is forced to exclaim, "*Simia quam similis turpissima bestia nobis*—How like to ourselves is the ape, the basest of animals."[5]

Let us first take the following general view of the American savages by the excellent painter of their manners, Father *Lafitau:*[6] "*Ceux-ci se font un honneur de leur oisiveté; la paresse, l'indolence, la faineantise sont dans leur goût & dans le fonds de leur charactere: de sorte que n'ayant ni sciences ni metiers, n'ayant plus d'ailleurs, ou presque plus les exercices reglés du temps passé qui pouvoient les tenir en haleine, ils sont les gens du monde les plus desœuvrez; & si l'on en excepte certaines petites choses qui ne leur demandent pas beaucoup de temps, moins encore de suggestion & d'application, ils sont presque toûjours les bras croisez, ne faisant autre chose que tenir des assemblées, chanter, manger,*

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[5] Not Horace, but Ennius, cited by Cicero in *De Nat. Deorum*, 1. 35. It is a favorite quotation of Boswell; cf. *Hyp.* 62.

[6] Joseph François Lafitau, Jesuit historian, was born at Bordeaux; for years he was busied among the Canadian missions, especially in the district of the Iroquois. On his return to France, he occupied himself with literature until his death in 1740; his chief work was that to which Boswell alludes, *Moeurs des sauvages américains comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps* (1723), in which he attempted to prove that the aborigines of America came originally from the barbarians who first occupied the continent and isles of Greece. See also Robertson's *History of America*, 4. 39 ff., for many of the ideas in Boswell's essay.

In the quotation from Lafitau, *suggestion* was originally printed *suggeiston*, and left uncorrected by Boswell. The punctuation of the passage is left in the original (and characteristic) unaccented state of the magazine text. For other instances of Boswell's careless French, see *Letters of B.*, 1. 58, 62, 65, 76, 85; and *Hyp.* 22, 30, 38, 69.

jouer, dormir, & ne rien faire—They are proud of their idleness. Laziness, indolence, sloth, are quite to their taſte, and the foundation of their character; ſo that having neither ſcience nor employments, and beſides, having now no longer, or ſcarcely having the ſtated exercises of former times which used to keep them brisk, they are the people in the world who have the leaſt occupation; and if we except certain little things which do not require much attention, and ſtill less care and application, they are almoſt always to be seen with their arms crossed, doing nothing else but hold assemblies, sing, eat, play, sleep, and in short do nothing." Would not one suppose that this view had been taken from the life, amongſt the very fine people in London.[7]

But it will be proper to present my readers with several detached particulars of similarity which I am persuaded will ſtrike them in a lively manner.

Savages submit to a great deal of trouble and pain to get their bodies adorned as they think, tattoing or pricking the skin with black spots in curious figures, and thruſting ear-rings and other jewels through their flesh. So do very fine people. They are pinched in tight clothes and ſtays, and little shoes, and I queſtion if the hair dresser's operations of twiſting and burning be not as severe as any that the savages undergo.

Savages universally paint their skins, from which cuſtom, the original, at leaſt the moſt ancient inhabitants of Britain that we know of, were called *Picts*. Very fine people paint too, some more, some less, in which I suppose they do not differ from the savages.

Savages are eager for present enjoyment, and gratify their desires without any regard to future advantage. *Lafitau* gives a ſtriking inſtance.—

"*Pour mieux depouiller un arbre ils le coupent par le pied sans se mettre en peine des avantages qu'ils pourroient en retirer les années suivantes.* The better to despoil a tree of its fruit they cut it down, without troubling their heads about the good which they might get by it in after years."

Do not very fine people act juſt in the same manner? and is cutting the fruit tree more irrational than spending the capital of

[7] This and the following irregularities in punctuation are Boswell's own; he left them uncorrected. For his notable disregard of question marks, in particular, see *Hyp.* 67 n. 13.

one's fortune, regardless of the years to come, for which the interest of it was to be a provision?

The savages have a very narrow conversation having little knowledge except what concerns their hunting and war. And their merriment when examined, will be found to arise from very trifling causes. Here too the resemblance holds between them and very fine people, whose knowledge is limited to their amusements, scandal and petty quarrels; and whose jests are so slender that they are perceptible only to themselves, and that too but for the instant.

Savages are unquiet and restless, and continually moving from place to place. So are very fine people who flutter about from their country seats to London; and from London to all the wells and bathing places in England; and sometimes even to the continent.

Savages are gamesters to the utmost excess. *Lafitau*, after describing a kind of game of chance which they play with stones of fruit colour, to serve as dice, observes,[8] "*Les sauvages ont la meme fureur pour ce jeu, que les joueurs les plus acharnés peuvent avoir.* The savages have the same rage for this game that the most desperate gamesters can have."

He tells us that they will not only lose all the little property that they have, so as to be obliged to run to the woods stark naked during the greatest rigours of winter. But that they will even lose their liberty for a certain term; that they will do any thing to procure success at play, and will sometimes prepare themselves by austere fasting for several days. I need not surely say much to point out their resemblance in this respect to very fine people, who will play to lose all they have in the world, and to be thrown into gaol; and who, as the phrase is, will diet themselves like race horses that they may be cool and clever at the gaming table.

While I write of the savage life, I beg that my readers for the sake of accuracy and correctness may observe, that all the particulars which I mention as counterparts to very fine life are not to be found in any one savage nation. For I do not know that any one

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[8] Originally printed *observe*, and left uncorrected by Boswell. See his correction of the same sort of error in *Hyp.* 21 n. 21.

savage nation is quite the *ton*, a word which I think it lawful to use in my essays because it is the reigning expression of the present time in England to signify very high fashionable manners.[9] But I can assure my readers that every one particular which I mention is to be found in some savage nation; so that my savage portrait like that of a beautiful woman by an exquisite painter, has no features but what are collected from nature, though his assemblage of them is no where to be seen.[10]

Savages indulge themselves in "*vaga venus*—variety of amorous connexions." Their marriages are very frequently and very easily dissolved, and they have a very careless indifference about their offspring; so much does mere selfishness predominate in them. The resemblance here between them and very fine people is perfectly exact. Savages, when their parents grow old and infirm, very piously put them to death, that they may not be burthensome and may escape the sufferings of lingering illness, and painful dissolution. Very fine people are exceedingly well disposed to perform the same pious office, which they would gladly do, were they not restrained by laws made by not very fine people. But they do as well as they can. Their parents even before they are very old, have their hearty good wishes for a speedy exit from this evil world; and in the mean time they anticipate the fruits, take a "*prælibatio hæreditatis*—a fore taste of the inheritance," as the Roman lawyers say, by raising money upon future annuities, or receiving so much in hand to pay a great deal more when a father's estate shall open, or a mother's jointure fall in.[11]

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[9] Cf. *Boswelliana*, 205:

Nichols said that a man of the *ton*, as the phrase is,—of high breeding, and fashionable air, has at first an irresistible superiority over plain men, others who have not such superficial advantages. He has a shake of the head which frightens you, but when you are once used to him you laugh at the shake. 23d Sept., 1780.

[10] Cf. Sir Joshua Reynolds's expression of what beauty consists in—the merging of many differing beauties: in the third of his *Fifteen Discourses delivered in the Royal Academy*.

[11] Boswell himself had done just this, with results which one of his later letters to Temple shows (*Letters of B.*, 2. 384):

The state of my affairs is very disagreeable. . . . . My rent roll is above £1600; but deducting annuities, interest of debts, and expence absolutely necessary at Auchinleck, I have but about £850 to spend.

See also *ibid.*, 2. 327, 416, and Johnson's letters warning Boswell against foretasting his inheritance (*Life of J.*, 4. 171, 175).

Savages, when fatigued by their violent pursuits and uneasy from vacancy of mind, have recourse to sleep with eager hopes of relief, and pass a considerable portion of their time in drowsy slumbers. Very fine people exhausted by the varieties of a London day are equally glad with the savages, to seek repose; and whoever has occasion to call at their houses in a morning, as all the forenoon is now called,[12] will find how long they cherish that quiescent state. Their recovery from it to active existence always conveys to my mind the idea of a savage or some inferior animal stretching its legs and slowly rising up. For their servants tell us they are "not stirring yet."

But I have yet two circumstances to mention of resemblance to savages, which will provoke our very fine people most of all; though I do not think they are the two circumstances in which they resemble savages the most, I mean contemptuous pride, and uncourteous behaviour.

Savages are full of conceit of themselves as superior beings, and despise all who differ from them in any respect. Very fine people have the very same habit, proceeding too from the very same cause, a narrowness of mind used to only one set of ideas, and an ignorance of the excellencies of others. They can assign

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[12] *Morning* was originally the period from a little before to a little after sunrise; the word gradually became synonymous with *morn*. Fashionable persons in the eighteenth century extended the period of morning to the accepted dinner-hour; cf. *Tom Jones*, 15. 2—"Past three in the morning, or to reckon by the old style, in the afternoon" (1749). Moritz, in his *Travels in . . . . England* (1782—English translation, 1795), says,

> In the morning, it is usual to walk out in a sort of negligée, or morning-dress, your hair not dressed, ... and in a frock and boots. In Westminster, the morning lasts till four, or five o'clock, at which time they dine. . . . . The farther you go from the Court, into the City, the more regular and domestic the people become; and there they generally dine about three o'clock, *i.e.* as soon as the business or 'Change is over. (Oxford Misc. Ed., 82.)

Five years before this *Hypochondriack* was written, Boswell in a letter to Johnson used the expression *forenoon* (*Life of J.*, 2. 324 and note); he allowed it to stand in the first two editions of the *Life*, but changed it in the third. Birkbeck Hill suggests that Boswell considered the term a Scotticism, but if so, he was late in making up his mind. In his *Hebrides*, Boswell apologizes for another Scotticism (p. 15), but uses *forenoon* without apology (pp. 35, 164, 181, 316, 399, 433). Once he uses *morning* evidently to mean early afternoon (*ibid.*, 154), and once his expression suggests that to him *morning* and *forenoon* were interchangeable (*ibid.*, 449). See also the excerpt from a letter of Boswell, quoted in *Hyp.* 45 n. 8.

no reason for their fancied superiority. They must not say that they judge upon comparison; for comparison cannot be without knowledge.

Savages are without courteousness, which has been well called artificial benevolence,[13] as its tendency is to make every one happier to whom it is shown. Our very fine people have actually studied themselves back into barbarism; for, instead of exerting those laudable little arts by which sluggish and untoward nature is roused and rendered gay, and the happiness of society is promoted by making every one of some consequence, and giving every one continually something to do, were it only to listen with attentive complacency, the modern very fine life is an absolute extinction of all good breeding. There is what the French call a *nonchalance*, a cold indifference. There must be complete ease and no sort of trouble. Not only must very fine people not laugh, as is laid down by that eminent professor Lord Chesterfield,[14] but they must not talk rationally, for that would be laborious discussion; nor wittily, for that would be prize-fighting. They must not enquire about the health or welfare of one another, or of their families; for that would be vulgar. Nay, they hardly bow or curtesey at meeting; but make their approach as immoveable as *Iroquois*. It is even not polite now for a gentleman to hand a lady to her carriage, but she is allowed to walk away from a drawing room by herself like an Indian *Squaw* from the social circle round a fire of wood, to the next hill or brook. In short, one cannot without some indignation as well as wonder and pity behold the absurd abolition of all that system of good manners by which civilized society is raised so far above the rude state of nature. I hope that this depravation like all other foolish fashions will not last long. In the mean time it

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[13] An adaptation of a phrase of Johnson's; see *Hebr.*, 93:

He insisted that politeness was of great consequence in society. "It is (said he) fictitious benevolence. It supplies the place of it amongst those who see each other only in publick, or but little."

This is clearly a case of Boswell's recollecting a conversation with Johnson, but not consulting his journal to make it *authentick*.

[14] *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*, ed. Bradshaw, 1. 94, 164, 454. The idea comes from the intellectual standards of the Renaissance; cf. Sir. Philip Sidney's distinction between delight and mere mirth (*Defence of Poesy*, ed. A. S. Cook, 50–51). See also Johnson on Swift's refusal to laugh, on Pope's (in *Lives of the Poets*), and Congreve, *The Double Dealer*, 1. 1.

should be a very sensible mortification to the fairest, very fine lady to be assured of what is most certainly true, that with all her charms while she shews such scornful pride, and such uncourteous indifference, she is indeed no better than *une belle sauvage*, a beautiful savage.[15]

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[15] Boswell's careful translation is perhaps more necessary here than usual. It is possible that he is referring to his model *The Spectator* (28, on street signs):

> As for the bell-savage, which is the sign of a savage man standing by a bell, I was . . . . puzzled upon the conceit of it, till I accidentally fell into the reading of an old romance translated out of the French; which gives an account of a very beautiful woman who was found in a wilderness, and is called in the French *La belle Sauvage;* and is every where translated by our countrymen the bell-savage.

In Elizabethan days (*ca.* 1560), one of the five great inns fitted up and rented to players for dramatic spectacles was the *Bell Savage*, on Ludgate Hill (Adams, *A Life of William Shakespeare*, 105).

No. XXI. June 1779.

[ON QUOTATIONS]

Nec mihi vitio vertas si res quas ex lectione varia mutuabor ipsis sæpe verbis quibus ab ipsis auctoribus enarratæ sunt explicabo.

—Macrobius.[1]

"Nor must you find fault with me if I often give you what I have borrowed from my various reading, in the very words of the authors themselves."

QUOTATION is so important a help to every one who undertakes a literary work, that I think one of these papers may be very well employed in considering it. I do not recollect to have ever found it considered by any other writer; however much almost all of us have been indebted to it; and therefore it is, at least to myself, a subject which has the advantage of novelty.

Dr. Johnson, in that wonderful achievement of one man, his "Dictionary of the English Language," defines a Quotation to be "a passage adduced out of an author as evidence or illustration:" This is no doubt the meaning of the word when taken in a reasonable and proper sense. But we shall find upon a more close enquiry that Quotation has been in effect extended to many other meanings.

My readers, who may at first be apt to consider Quotation as downright pedantry,[2] will be surprised when I assure them, that next to the simple imitation of sounds and gestures, Quotation is the most natural and most frequent habitude of human nature. For, Quotation must not be confined to passages adduced out of authors. He who cites the opinion, or remark, or saying of another, whether it has been written or spoken, is certainly one who quotes; and this we will find to be universally practised.

Modest men who have a diffidence in their own opinion, or what the French very well express by the phrase "*mauvaise honte*

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[1] *Saturnaliorum Libri*, 1, praefatio.

[2] A conversation of 1781 shows the type of man who censured quotation, and Johnson's support of it (*Life of J.*, 4. 118):

The subject of quotation being introduced, Mr. Wilkes censured it as pedantry. Johnson. "No, Sir, it is a good thing; there is community of mind in it. Classical quotation is the *parole* of literary men all over the world."

See also *Hyp.* 22, on the Earl of Dorset and Mr. George Wallace.

—a foolish bashfulness," are very ready to quote; either mentioning only the opinion of somebody else as being quite afraid to risk their own, or mentioning it together with their own, as thinking that their own requires confirmation and support.

Of this no candid man can disapprove, because it is a pretty certain evidence of that humility of mind, which extensive thinking and knowledge can scarcely fail to produce. Accordingly we may observe that men of the greatest abilities are glad to shelter themselves under respectable authority. An opinion which one distinguished genius hazarded, becomes more secure, when adopted by another, like Fame in Virgil, "*Vires acquirit eundo*—It gathers strength in its progress,"[3] and in the course of time having received the approbation of many understandings, it attains all the certainty of which any of the opinions of man are capable.

There is at the same time, it must be confessed, a kind of Quotation, which is not the effect of so good a cause as modesty, but is owing to indolence and habitual want of thought. One who has indulged this despicable state of mind becomes a mere carrier of other peoples sentiments, which he delivers with as much servility as a footman who delivers the messages of one person to another, taking care only to be exact as to the names and the words, without concerning himself as to the import, whether it is right or whether it is wrong. I knew a very worthy old clergyman in my neighbourhood in the country, who at every third sentence almost, used to quote his wife, and sometimes his servants, for sayings not peculiar or striking, but such as he himself surely could easily have uttered. Perhaps indeed he may have had a ridiculous scruple of saying any thing whatever as from himself, which he recollected at the time had been previously said by another. As *Savage* is related to have specified with a conscientious minuteness any word in any of his poems, which somebody else had happened to suggest to him.[4]

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[3] *Aen.*, 4. 175. The constant discussion of the propriety of quotation is illustrated by Johnson's quotation of Warburton (Johnson's *Works*, ed. 1787, 8. 288):

Dryden, I observe, borrows for want of leisure, and Pope for want of genius; Milton out of pride, and Addison out of modesty.

[4] Cf. Johnson's *Life of Savage:*

A kinder name than that of vanity ought to be given to the delicacy with which he was always careful to separate his own merit from every other man's, and to reject that praise to which he had no claim. He did not forget, in mentioning his performances, to mark every

When facts are to be told on the credit of those who had sufficient opportunities of knowing their truth, Quotation then assumes the form of the first branch of Dr. Johnson's definition, and becomes evidence. And as all facts of ancient date must be ascertained by the evidence of men who lived at the time, it is a very material defect in many of our modern historians, especially the French, that they do not give us their *authorities*, that is to say, references to the authors from whom the several facts, of which their narrative is composed, are taken, but run smoothly on, page after page, as if they had been eye-witnesses of all that they are telling.[5] As a contrast to this negligence it is but justice to uncommon merit to mention the *Annals of Scotland*, by Sir David Dalrymple, where the learned and laborious author hath by very extraordinary pains collected authentick evidence as to every particular of any consequence in his work, and distinctly pointed out to his readers where they may examine the originals.[6]

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line that had been suggested or amended; and was so accurate, as to relate that he owed *three words* in "The Wanderer" to the advice of his friends.

The old clergyman was probably the Rev. John Dun, pastor at Auchinleck and Boswell's first teacher (*Letters of B.*, 2. 387 n.); see *Hyp.* 65 n. 9.

[5] One of these guilty scholars was the priest without a parish, Guillaume Thomas François Raynal (1713–1796), whose *Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Établissements et du Commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770) owed much, not only to his collaborators Diderot, DeLeyre, Holbach, and others, but to unacknowledged quotation from David Hume. Boswell says, quoting Hume (*Letters of B.*, 1. 232)—

He spoke highly of the *Histoire Philosophique et Politique*, and I wondered to find him excuse very easily the authour of that book for translating long passages from English writers without quoting them, but just ingrafting the passages into his text. He said there are about fifteen pages translated from his history; but he complained of one mistake. . . . . He says Abbé Raynal cannot have written that book himself. The eloquence must have been borrowed.

[6] Sir David Dalrymple (1726–1792) was the friend and frequent correspondent of Boswell (see *Letters of B.*). He studied law at Utrecht, and after a career of steady worth, if not great brilliance, rose to the bench as Lord Hailes. The first volume of the *Annals*, which Johnson had criticized in MS, appeared in 1776; the second, in 1779. See *Life of J.*, Index, under Hailes, *Annals of Scotland*—especially 3. 67, where Johnson says that the work "has such a stability of dates, such a certainty of facts, and such a punctuality of citation." Gibbon also praises the author as "a diligent collector and an accurate critic" (*Memoirs of My Life*, ed. Hill, 204). In his journal of the Hebridean tour, Boswell speaks of Dalrymple's having written "a variety of . . . . works in prose and verse, both Latin and English," and of his being "one of the best philologists in Great

But it is only as to matters of *fact* that Quotation can be called *evidence*. In matters of *opinion* it is *authority*. In *both* it is *illustration*. In matters of fact we must be well acquainted with the characters of the authors who are quoted, with their connexions, their passions, and their prejudices, in order to determine how much we can trust to their veracity. In matters of opinion we must all be sensible that a proposition will often come with more weight in a Quotation, than from the author himself, provided the person who is quoted be one of greater knowledge or experience, or even an eminent name. The "*magni nominis umbra*—the shade of a great name," has much influence;[7] and what is somewhat curious, we listen with attention and reverence to the opinion or casual remark of an eminent man in any department, though what is quoted be quite unconnected with the sphere of his eminence. We are ready to think, and I believe with some justice, that he who is great in one line will probably not be little in another; for, that the same force of mind which has been highly distinguished where chiefly applied, will excel proportionably where applied in a lesser degree. Thus, I suppose we should all pay some regard to a military disposition planned by Milton—to the solution of a question in law by Shakespeare—to a prescription in physick by Lord Clarendon, or a theological speculation by Lord Chatham.[8]

It is not however always necessary to the good effect of Quotation, that the person quoted should be eminent. For of itself it in some degree rouses the attention. It enlivens by the intro-

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Britain." He edited or translated parts of Lactantius, Tertullian, and Minucius Felix; Boswell uses lines from his Minucius as a heading to *Hyp.* 55.

[7] *Lucan*, 1. 135; quoted also in *The Spectator*, 563.

[8] Cf. *Hebr.*, 38:

JOHNSON. "No, Sir; it is only, one man has more mind than another. He may direct it differently; he may, by accident, see the success of one kind of study, and take a desire to excel in it. I am persuaded that, had Sir Isaac Newton applied to poetry, he would have made a very fine epick poem. I could as easily apply to law as to tragick poetry."

The same idea is used by Swift in the Martinus Scriblerus papers, on *The Art of Sinking in Poetry* (chap. 6):

It is affirmed by Quintilian, that the same genius which made Germanicus so great a general, would, with equal application, have made him an excellent heroic poet. In like manner, reasoning from the affinity there appears between arts and sciences, I doubt not, but an active catcher of butterflies, ... an industrious collector of shells, ... or a diligent breeder of tame rabbits, might severally excel in their respective parts of the bathos.

The allusion to Germanicus occurs in Quintilian's *De Inst. Orat.*, 10. 1. 91.

duction of a plurality of ideas, not only of the subject, but of the person quoted as having treated it. And personification is always lively. Good judges of dramatick performances hold, that the same persons should never be long upon the stage at once, nor one person speak long at a time, because variety and change, even when upon a narrow scale keep an audience awake. Thus a speaker or writer who would not have his hearers or readers weary, should not continue long to address them in his own person, but should break his discourse, by occasionally calling in other persons, by Quotation. Accordingly, we find the methodist preachers, who must undoubtedly be allowed the praise of keeping their audience more attentive than the generality of preachers do, are perpetually introducing Quotations. *Whitefield*, who was the greatest popular orator that I ever heard, made frequent use of Quotation to vivify his discourses. He used to quote not only people of eminence in all ages and countries, but when he was at a loss for a better help, would tell what was said by a good old woman in New England, or some other person of the same rank; and in that way he took care that as long as he preached those who were present should hear.[9]

[9] George Whitefield (1714–1770), who in his boyhood served as drawer in his father's inn, graduated from Oxford in 1736, and was ordained deacon in the same year. He had formed a taste for plays at preparatory school, but turned his dramatic impulses to the service of Methodism while he was at college. He fell out not only with the established clergy but with Wesley and the Scottish Seceders; he remained a great favorite with the people, whom he frequently addressed in the open air. His audiences often numbered as many as 20,000 persons, all of whom were held by his strong, appealing voice. His life was spent in evangelistic tours through the British Isles and in America, where he established an orphanage and college. His death occurred in Newburyport, Massachusetts, a few hours after he had arrived in the town to hold evangelistic services.

John Timbs, in his *Century of Anecdote*, bears out Boswell's impression of Whitefield:

> Of the wonderful preaching of George Whitefield we have many special records. The prodigious effects produced by his words are said to have been chiefly due to the tone and manner which set them off. . . . . His voice was captivating as powerful. Franklin states that it produced the same kind of pleasure with beautiful music, and that without being interested in the subject it was impossible not to be gratified with the perfection of the elocution. His vehemence was excessive. . . . . Sometimes he stamped; sometimes wept, sometimes stopped, exhausted by emotion, and appeared as if about to expire. He usually vomited after his exertions, and sometimes brought up blood. But all this tempest of passion was managed with art so admirable that it wore the appearance of uncontrollable nature. Passages which repel the reader by their extravagance and impropriety, entranced the most fastidious auditors by the sheer force of his extraordinary delivery. Nothing which was intended to be

An excess of Quotation is to be sure absurd and ridiculous. We have it very well ridiculed in several of the characters in our comedies; and in none of them more laughably than in Mr. Murphy's *Apprentice*, whose rage for theatrical entertainments makes him speak perpetually in *Cento*, saying nothing, however trivial, but in the words of some well known play.[10] To have our own opinion, whether original or derived from somebody else, well supported, is desireable. *Prior* represents his reverend doctor who was embarrassed with a wishing spouse, as having recourse to argumentative auxiliaries, which was wisely meant to prevent other auxiliaries being called in.

> "He rang'd his tropes and preach'd up patience,
> "Back'd his opinion with *Quotations.*"[11]

But as it would be foolish to bring a cloud of witnesses for the evidence of a plain and simple matter, it must be reckoned equally so to muster an host of authorities to back an opinion of no difficulty. The Dutch and German authors are remarkable for the multiplicity of their Quotations, so that their pages are quite brown with *Italicks;* and I remember a ludicrous comparison which one

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reverent could well seem less so than his address to the attendant angel, whom he supposed to be about to ascend from his station among the multitude without being able to report that a single person had been turned from error. He stamped with his foot, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and cried aloud, "Stop, Gabriel! Stop, Gabriel, ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God!" . . . .

Whitefield's first sermon was preached to a crowded audience in the church of his native parish. He had, when a boy, been no contemptible actor, a circumstance which in his journals he wishes to be able to record in tears of blood, but which was, probably, of great advantage to him.

For Johnson's scathing comment on Whitefield's oratory, see *Life of J.*, 2. 91; *Hebr.*, 39–40. On the success of dissenting preachers, as opposed to that of the established clergy, see *Life of J.*, 2. 141–42:

He observed, that the established clergy in general did not preach plain enough; and that polished periods and glittering sentences flew over the heads of the common people, without any impression upon their hearts. Something might be necessary, he observed, to excite the affections of the common people, who were sunk in languor and lethargy, and therefore he supposed that the new concomitants of methodism might probably produce so desirable an effect. The mind, like the body, he observed, delighted in change and novelty, and even in religion itself, courted new appearances and modifications.

[10] Chiefly Shakespeare—and of Shakespeare, chiefly *Hamlet.*

[11] *Paulo Purganti and his Wife,* 138–39. The doctor is not a reverend one, but an M.D. For Johnson's laughing defense of this narrative of a wishing spouse, see *Life of J.*, 3. 219.

day occurred to me, that a page of a German divine or lawyer was like a slice of rich plumb-pudding. It is quite mosaick work, quite an inlaid table, and resembles a beggar's gown, in which there is no large piece of the same cloth, but an aggregate of various rags. Such writing is a proof of poverty of sentiment in an author himself; though on the other hand a proper mixture of apposite Quotations gives a richness to a composition. The old fashioned divines of this nation, especially the puritans, overloaded their discourses with Quotations from scripture. This renders them tedious and dull. Yet religious compositions are much the better for being properly sprinkled and seasoned with the sacred words themselves, when "many a holy text around is strewd,"[12] without their being so many as to croud and encumber. I know no sermons which have hit this to a greater degree of perfection than those of the late Dr. Ogden, Woodwardean Professor at Cambridge.[13]

Quotation is more universal and more ancient than one would perhaps believe. We find the Greek and Roman classicks quoting one from another, and sometimes quoting from their own works; nay, we find a great many Quotations in the bible passages being transferred from one sacred composition to another, sometimes as pointing out the fulfilment of prophecies, sometimes as strengthening a precept, and sometimes only as illustration. Nay, St. Paul quotes a passage from a profane poet as the foundation of very salutary counsel.[14] It is not very difficult to avoid direct Quotation,

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[12] Gray's *Elegy*. For Boswell's delight in Gray, see *Hyp.* 22, 23, 61.

[13] Samuel Ogden (1716–1778), the favorite preacher of George III. He was appointed Woodwardean professor in geology at Cambridge in 1764, but in spite of his brilliant expression never rose further; his manners were marked by blunt and unengaging candor, and his appearance was grim and uncouth. Boswell "set a very high value" on Ogden's *Sermons on Prayer*, "having been much edified by them" (*Hebr.*, 31). Birkbeck Hill notes, "Boswell mentions them so often that in Rowlandson's caricatures of the tour he is commonly represented as having them in his hand or his pocket." See also *ibid.*, 42, 66, 77, 99, 321, 370, 399; *Life of J.*, 3. 281.

[14] St. Paul quotes profane poets more than once—in *Acts*, 17. 28, and *1 Cor.*, 15. 33. Boswell probably refers to the latter passage—"Evil communications corrupt good manners"—which, according to George Colman (notes to Terence's *Eunuch*, 1. 3) was taken from Menander's comedy *Thaïs*.

The line in *Acts*—"as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring"—comes from the Stoic poet Aratus (*Phaenom.*, 5). Cleanthes,

by changing the form of a sentiment; and considering how small the quantity is of pure original thought, we are not to think it strange that the greatest proportion of all writing is but new workmanship of old bullion. It would indeed be happy if there were more bullion in our writers, more gold and less tinsel, alluding to Boileau's too depreciating comparison of Tasso with Virgil.[15] But for the reasons which I have mentioned, I approve of Quotations from authors in their own exact words. One advantage there certainly is in Quotation, that if the authors cited be good, there is at least so much worth reading in the book of him who quotes them. Our recollection of excellent passages may be thus refreshed, and our critical taste may be amused with comparing the different manners of different writers, of which specimens are brought together. It is, I own, exceedingly difficult to avoid an excess in Quotation; and it is the more difficult in proportion as a writer has his memory stored with variety of learning. In compositions of desultory instruction and entertainment, such as these essays which I venture to present to the publick, Quotations may be more liberally admitted. But it is otherwise in works of narration, or reasoning, in a chain of propositions. For in these, fine thoughts and allusions in other authors must be passed by, like the golden apples of Atalanta. For if we stay to pick them up, our progress will be retarded. For the same reason, Quotations are improper in solemn publick deeds, or in writings upon business. Yet these have not always been free of Quotations. In the Journals of the House of Commons some reigns ago, we have upon record several Quotations in the speeches of our sovereigns, and in the returns made to them by the Speaker of the House of Commons; and I myself have read a settlement of his affairs by a gentleman who was remarkably fond of *Horace*, in so much that he named a son for him; and in that settlement there were many Quotations from his favourite poet.

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also a Stoic, has a similar sentiment—"For we are his [Zeus's] race." (Peake, *A Commentary on the Bible*, 1920.)

[15] *Satires*, 9:

> Tous les jours, à la cour, un sot de qualité
> Peut juger de travers avec impunité;
> À Malherbe, à Racan, préférer Théophile,
> Et le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile.

We shall often find that Quotation is only an ostentatious display, or perhaps affectation of learning. In the first case it is truely pedantry, and a fit subject for ridicule; in the latter it is imposition, and when detected deserves a more severe censure. Many authors quote only at second-hand by adopting Quotations inserted in the writings of other authors; or quote only from indexes, so that what they quote is probably all that they have read of the books which they formally cite. An index is one of the most convenient inventions of literature, and one of the best aids to the acquisition and retention of knowledge. But there is no doubt, that it is upon too many occasions made the guide to that species of imposition which I have just now pointed out, and which is one of the many tricks of the "*Charlataneria eruditorum* —the quackery of the learned," under which title, an author upon the continent has published a curious and diverting treatise.[16]

I have mentioned that there are Quotations introduced into the speeches of some of our sovereigns, and the returns by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It may not be amiss to give a few instances; Thomas Williams, Esq. speaker, has several allusions and Quotations in his speech to Queen Elizabeth, 1562. This was very suitable to so learned a queen. No less in character are a number of allusions and Quotations in the speeches of the scho-

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[16] The *De Charlataneria Eruditorum Declamationes Duae* of Johann Burckhard Mencke or Menckenius (1675–1732), published at Leipzig in 1715. The two discourses had been presented as lectures at the University of Leipzig (1713, 1715), where the personal application of the criticism was so keenly felt that an effort was made to suppress the subsequent publication. The only result was a greater success for the work, which was translated into Dutch, Spanish, Italian, French, and English. Mencke, who traveled and taught in England as well as on the continent, was one of the group of great Lowlands scholars (Vossius, Tollius, Vorstius, and others) to whom Boswell refers elsewhere and with whose works he had no doubt become acquainted during his stay in Utrecht. See *Hyp.* 50, 66.

The American critic H. L. Mencken is a descendant of Johann Mencke; the common element in their critical methods is interesting material for the student of heredity. See Goldberg, *The Man Mencken*, 1925, 39 ff.

For an illustration of the frauds which the elder Mencke was exposing, see *Life of J.*, 4. 118 n. 2:

Cumberland says that Mr. Dilly, speaking of the profusion of quotation which some writers affectedly make use of, observed that he knew a Presbyterian parson who, for eighteen pence, would furnish any pamphleteer with as many scraps of Greek and Latin as would pass him off for an accomplished classic.

laſtick monarch James, and in the returns made to him by the Speaker, which I am positive from internal evidence have been dictated by James himself; witness the following passages from the speech of Sir Edward Phelips, serjeant at law, and one of the knights for Somersetshire, who, as Speaker of the House of Commons, made the return to James's long laboured speech on his accession. It begins "Moſt renowned, and of all other moſt worthy to be admired sovereign." It thus describeth the High Court of Parliament: "This Court ſtandeth compounded of two powers; the one ordinary, the other absolute; ordinary in the Lords and Commons proceedings, but in your Highness absolute; either negatively to fruſtrate, or affirmatively to confirm, but not to inſtitute." He has a deal of Quotations and allusions, and metaphors, particularly he says, "the laws yield more fruits of reason than words, the buds of art and blossoming terms of eloquence." But the following sentence is moſt characteriſtick of its true author. "And thus being by the rules of discretion foretold, that to offend your sacred ears with *multa*, since to satisfy your gracious expectations with *multum*, is denied me, were an error of errors the moſt erroneous."

In Charles the Firſt's reign, the Speaker, John Glanville, Esq. serjeant at law, quotes to the king.

> "*Serus in cœlum redeas diuque*
> "*Lætus intersis populo* Britanno."
> "O may'ſt thou late thy place in Heaven obtain,
> "But long in happiness o'er Britain reign."[17]

Little did he think of the shocking events which afterwards befel that unfortunate monarch. In the same reign the Speaker, Sir John Finch, addressed the king thus: "We live neither enthralled to the fury and rage of the giddy multitude, nor yet to the diſtracted wills of many maſters, but under the command of a king the ſtay and ſtrength of a people: one, as Homer saith well of kings,

πολλῶν ἀντάξιος ἄλλων.[18]

[17] Adapted from Horace, *Odes*, 1. 2 . 45. Mr. John Glanville addressed the king on April 15, 1640.

[18] *Iliad*, 11. 514—"the worth of many men." Sir John Finch addressed Charles on March 19, 1627.

Originally the accent was omitted from ἄλλων; Boswell made no correction.

If my readers shall find themselves disposed to treat this mode of quotation as ſtrange pedantry, let them consider that we in this age have not ſo much reaſon to boaſt of our fancied improvement. For if there is leſs pedantry it is becauſe there is leſs learning.[19]

I cannot omit a ſpecies of Quotation which is very frequently uſed with great ſucceſs, which is citing other perſons' ſayings to themſelves, or in their preſence with reſpectful approbation, in the way of flattery, than which few modes of flattery are more inſinuating; and indeed it is ſo oblique that thoſe who are moſt on their guard againſt flattery will be inſenſibly won by it.[20] Many a time do we hear a man pay his court in this way, by quoting things of very little moment with an air of much importance. As thus: "Well, I ſhall never forget what your lordſhip obſerved upon that occaſion," or, "as my lord once remarked to me." This kind of flattery has ſtill more weight if he who uſes it mentions

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[19] Cf. *Hyp.* 50 and *Life of J.*, 1. 516, 530 (where Boswell is obviously hoping that a ſound knowledge of Greek and Latin need not be conſidered a neceſſity of education); 4. 23; *Hebr.*, 90 ff.:

> Learning has decreaſed in England, becauſe learning will not do ſo much for a man as formerly. There are other ways of getting preferment. Few biſhops are now made for their learning.

See also *Hebr.*, 66, and Hill's note, *Life of J.*, 1. 181. Contraſt to theſe, paſſages in defenſe of the contemporary age:

> I am always angry when I hear ancient times praiſed at the expence of modern times. There is now a great deal more learning in the world than there was formerly; for it is univerſally diffuſed. You have, perhaps, no man who knows as much Greek and Latin as Bentley; no man who knows as much mathematics as Newton; but you have many more men who know Greek and Latin, and who know mathematics.

(*Ibid.*, 4. 251. See also 3. 4, 288, and *Hyp.* 52.)

[20] Cf. *Life of J.*, 2. 400—"Mrs. Thrale . . . . frequently practiſed a coarſe mode of flattery by repeating his *bon-mots* in his hearing"; and *ibid.*, 2. 540—"Never ſpeak of a man in his own preſence. It is always indelicate, and may be offenſive."

Gibbon could not "hear without emotion the perſonal compliment" which Sheridan paid him "in the preſence of the Britiſh nation" at Warren Haſtings's trial (*Memoirs of My Life*, ed. Hill, 228), though Samuel Rogers ſhows how profound a compliment it was, in his *Table-Talk*, 63:

> During one of theſe days, Sheridan, having obſerved Gibbon among the audience, took occaſion to mention "the luminous author of *The Decline and Fall.*" After he had finiſhed, one of his friends reproached him with flattering Gibbon.
>
> "Why, what did I ſay of him?" aſked Sheridan.
>
> "You called him the luminous author, &c."
>
> "Luminous! oh, I meant voluminous!"

that in consequence of the very wise observation or remark of the person flattered, he either did or forbore something of consequence. King James, whose talent at quoting was eminent, introduced into his first speech to his Parliament this complimentative species of Quotation. "And here have I occasion to speak to you, my lords the bishops; for as *you, my Lord of Durham,* said *very learnedly* to-day in your sermon, 'Correction without instruction is but a tyranny.' " He then in exhorting them to vigilance and care in their charges gives a specimen of his own style in a parenthesis "(the devil is so busy a bishop)."[21] He again quotes my Lord of Durham. "For *the bishop said well to-day,* That to deliberation would a large time be given; but to execution a greater promptness was required."

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[21] Boswell's corrections were incomplete here. The first sentence in this paragraph originally read *I cannot omit a species of Quotation . . . . which is citing another persons sayings to themselves;* the next to last, *He then in exhorting them to vigilance and care "their charges give a specimen of his own style in a parenthesis (the devil is so busy a bishop).*"

His only corrections, printed at the end of *Hyp.* 22, are: "*for* another *read* other; . . . . *insert* in *before* their, *and for* give *read* gives." See *Hyp.* 20 n. 8 for an instance of this last error which Boswell did not correct.

No. XXII. July 1779.

[ON SIMILARITY AMONG AUTHORS]

Et alterno deprenditur unus in ortu.—STATIUS.[1]
"In different risings it is still the same."

THE subject of this paper appears to me to be a very proper sequel to my last, in which I treated of *Quotation*. I am now to offer some thoughts upon that sameness or similarity which we frequently find between passages in different authors without quotation. This may be one of three things either what is called *Plagiarism*, or *Imitation*, or *Coincidence*.

But before proceeding to my immediate subject, I shall avail myself of that liberty which is the peculiar privilege of such a species of writing as a periodical paper like this, and shall give my readers something supplementary to my last number.

While I was writing my last number, I did not recollect to have ever found *Quotation* considered by any other writer. And the truth is, that I cannot yet point out any author, who, properly speaking, has *considered* it. But I am very well pleased either to recollect or find it even mentioned by others, and I take it for granted my readers will be pleased to have any instances brought under their view.

Sir Francis Osborn in his advice to a son, after exhorting him thus: "Follow not the tedious practice of such as seek wisdom only in learning: not attainable but by experience and natural parts. Much reading, like a too great repletion, stopping up, through a concourse of divers, sometimes contrary, opinions, the access of a nearer, newer, and quicker invention of your own." He says, "and for *Quotations*, they resemble sugar and wine marring the natural taste of the liquor, if it be good; if bad, that of itself: such patches rather making the rent seem greater by an interruption of the stile, than less, if not so neatly applied as to fall in without drawing. Nor is any thief in this kind sufferable, who comes not off like a Lacedæmonian, without discovery."

In this passage Sir Francis[2] is not accurate; for he confounds

[1] *Thebaidos*, 6. 239 ff.

[2] Rather, *Mr. Osborne*, as Boswell is careful to call him in the *Life of J.* (see *Hyp.* 1 n. 3). His *Advice to a Son* (1656) is his best-known work; in it

Quotation with *Plagiarism*. Most assuredly a writer who means to make what has been written by another pass as a part of his own work, which is at best but a theftuous trick, the only merit he can have is, being a dexterous thief. But I flatter myself I have shewn in my last number that quotations from other writers may contribute both to utility and amusement.

There is indeed a strange prejudice against *Quotation*. Prior in his Panegyrick on the Earl of Dorset, says, "He perfected his judgement by reading and digesting the best authors, though he quoted them very seldom." In this there may have been a pride of quality that shunned the appearance of being pedantick, and a haughty affectation of being independent of every help, for Prior adds, that he "rather seemed to draw his knowledge from his own stores, than to owe it to any foreign assistance."[3]

How different from that nobleman were the French nobility in the age of the illustrious Henry IV. who as Voltaire mentions in his *Histoire Genérale*, had been educated by his mother in the practice of reading the Bible, and was as well acquainted with it as with war and love. Voltaire tells us, "*Les citations de l'ecriture entraient dans ce qu'on appellait le bel esprit en ces tems la.*—Quotations from scripture made a part of what was called *bel ésprit* in those times."[4]

I cannot leave the subject of Quotation without presenting my readers with a curiosity which I picked up from a fellow-passenger in the Newcastle Fly going to London. It is a Hand Bill, the

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he expresses his low opinion of women (see note 11) and his contempt for universities and the "learning" proper to the education of the gentleman. His book was very popular among students at Oxford, and the withdrawal of it by the authorities on the ground that its vague references to religious matters tended to atheism caused an even greater sale of the work.

[3] The panegyrick is upon Charles Sackville, sixth Earl of Dorset (1637–1705 or 1706), in a dedication addressed to his son Lionel, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex. Cf. *Hyp.* 60.

The last word in Boswell's paragraph was printed *assistancc*, and left uncorrected by Boswell.

[4] *Essai sur l'histoire générale et sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756), chap. 174. Boswell quotes this work again in *Hebr.*, 227. The passage shows Boswell's uneven punctuation of French and English alike; cf. *Hyp.* 20 n. 6; 59 n. 7; 67 n. 13.

ſtyle of which, though not equal to that of Mr. Carter, the cook,[5] renders it worth being preſerved. But it is ſpecially entitled to a place here from its quotations; for who could expect to find both the tragedy of Hamlet, and the Bible, quoted in an advertiſement for the ſale of ſalt beef and pork?

"George Ramsay's Ware-house,

Quay-ſide

"ON PROVISION.

"The price of almoſt every kind of animal food has long been enormous, and thrown ſuch a load on the publick ſhoulder, as is too heavy for it to bear. The Rich have lamented—the leſs opulent felt—the more ſubordinate groaned under it, and it has preſſed the Poor and Needy down to the very ground. Many ſchemes for the remedy of this great and growing evil have been adopted. The publick-ſpirited and humane have united in bodies to ſuppreſs it. The legiſlative authority has interpoſed, and long ſince opened our ports for the importation of foreign ſupplies (particularly from Ireland;) but all theſe laudable endeavours have not proved productive of the end intended. They have, in ſome degree, indeed prevented the progreſs of this evil; but the cure of it is the *Conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed.*[6] Inattention, prepoſſeſſion, and miſtaken prejudices, have, in a great meaſure, obſtructed ſuch happy effects; or how ſhall we account for the large quantities of wholeſome proviſion now lying in the warehouſes of the City of London unnoticed, and in a manner without demand? At the preſent hour when Mutton and Beef are retailed from four-pence half-penny to five-pence half-penny per pound by the joint, and other meat proportionably dear, there is ſhut up in warehouſes the produce of ſome thouſands of Hogs and Oxen, together with large quantities of butter, all good merchantable proviſion, to be purchaſed on very eaſy conditions, and for want of which many of the poor are nearly periſhing in this town and ſuburbs, as alſo in almoſt every other part of the kingdom. Theſe conſiderations have determined ſome gentlemen, who wiſh well to the community, to attempt a diſtribution of the ſaid Proviſion, in a mode highly beneficial to their fellow-creatures, not doubting but it will be thought incumbent on mankind in general, to encourage an undertaking ſo laudable in itſelf, and pregnant with ſuch pleaſing conſequences: The ſaid Gentlemen have opened a warehouſe on the Quay-ſide, Newcaſtle, under the management of George Ramsay; by

[5] See *Hyp.* 18.

[6] *Hamlet*, 3. 1. 64–65.

which it will at once be seen that those of low circumstances may easily supply the necessities of themselves and families; and the benevolent have an opportunity of conveying to the hovels of the wretched (for a trifling sum) *Abundance of meat that perisheth; in return for which, they will hereafter receive the bread of everlasting life.*[7]

"P.S. The said Gentlemen propose also to accommodate the publick with a quantity of fine Newfoundland Cod-fish and Baccalao, of a very large size and excellent quality, the usefulness of which article (so beneficial to the navigation and commerce of this country) they wish may be made known, and the said Fish brought into general demand, by occasionally introducing it to the tables of every family in the course of the season.

"*Pro bono Publico,* with a view to reduce the high price of the necessaries of life.

"Prime slated Beef, from two-pence to three-pence half-penny per pound. Ditto Pork from two-pence half-penny to four-pence.

"All warranted sweet and good.

"Captains of ships taking a quantity in barrels will be served very reasonable."

Being now come to the subject of the present essay, I must candidly acknowledge, that in my opinion, the sameness or similarity which we frequently find between passages in different authors cannot be with absolute certainty ascribed to its proper origin unless where there is a passage of considerable length in one author, which we can discover in the very same words in another author; and then we may without hesitation pronounce that it is *Plagiarism.* A passage of considerable length, somewhat varied, may be *Imitation;* or it may be *Coincidence* to a certain degree both in thought and expression. A very short passage in one author may be precisely the same with one in another, from pure coincidence, or from ascribing that to instantaneous invention which is truely the effect of memory. But no man would be believed who should affirm, that a long passage exactly in another author seemed to him to be his own production. For although the mind can produce a little without being conscious of its labour, it cannot produce much with the same facility which we experience in the exercise of memory, so as not to be sensible of the difference.

If we should suppose all possible thoughts to be continually

[7] Paraphrase of *John,* 6. 27.

floating in the intellectual world, and circulating from mind to mind, there would be no difficulty in imagining what was one man's thought at one time to become another man's thought afterwards. But I really do not like such abstruse kind of speculation. I wish to reason upon such principles as experience furnishes, and not to go too far from the common and ordinary train of thinking. To speculate for instruction, or for amusement, is wise; but to distend our faculties by ineffectual stretches is both unwise and painful.[8]

There are innumerable plain truths which every rational being must acknowledge and express as soon as he has understanding and language. These do not fall under the subject of my present essay. No man is a plagiarist or an imitator who says two and two make four; nor is it to be remarked as *Coincidence* that millions say so. But there are many short reflexions not quite obvious, which may yet occur exactly in the same manner to different people. I remember a friend of mine applied to a barrister of great practice who was gathering money, what Horace says of the ant—"*Ore trahit quodcunque potest atque addit acervo*—gets with its *mouth* what it can and adds to the heap." I marked this down in my collection of good things. But some years afterwards I found the very same witty application in Butler's posthumous works, which my friend had never looked into.[9]

About twenty years ago there was published "A Letter to Mr. Mason on the marks of Imitation." I never saw this performance, but by extracts from it in the Monthly Review it appears to be

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[8] Cf. *Hyp.* 53 n. 2.

[9] A *bon mot* of William Nairne (d. 1811), admitted to the bar in 1755 and raised to the bench in 1786 with the title Lord Dunsinnan. The "collection of good things" is *Boswelliana*, where Boswell renders the remark (p. 249)—

> Mr. William Nairne observed that it may be said of a well-employed barrister who lays by much money, what Horace says of the *ant*—
>
> "*Ore* trahit quodcunque potest atque addit acervo."

Butler's use of the quotation is more savage than Nairne's; see *A Lawyer* (in Waller's edition of Butler's *Characters and Passages from Note-Books*, 74):

> . . . . that which *Horace* says of an Ant, *Ore trahit quodcunque potest, atque addit acervo*, is true of him; for he gathers all his Heap with the Labour of his Mouth, rather than his Brain and Hands.

The quotation is found in Horace, *Sat.*, 1. 1 . 34.

learned and ingenious.[10] The author of it traces many fine passages in English writers to a classical original, and some he shews to have been taken from other English writers. I shall give a few instances of similarity which I have remarked.

In Sir John Vanbrugh's exquisite comedy, *The Provoked Wife*, *Heartfree* says, "I always consider a woman not as the taylor, the shoemaker, the tire-woman, the sempstress; but I consider her as pure nature has contrived her."

Is not this very like a sentence of Sir Francis Osborn's, in his advice to a son? "If you consider beauty alone, quite discharged from such debentures, as she owes to the arts of tire-women, taylors, shoemakers, and perhaps painters, you will find the remains so inconsiderable as scarce to deserve your present thoughts, much less to be made the price of your perpetual slavery."[11]

In *The Spleen*, a poem, which is in general truely original, a lively image struck me, where he represents *Scandal* telling that a lady and gentleman were seen in a coach together

"Like Will and Mary on the coin."

But this is probably an imitation of Hudibras:

"Still amorous, and fond, and billing,
"Like Philip and Mary on a shilling."[12]

In Mr. Murphy's tragedy of Zenobia the fond expression

"Let me wander o'er him with my kisses,"

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[10] Monthly Review for February 1758.

[11] The warnings against women are to many the most interesting passages in Osborne's *Advice*. In his own day this element of it was ridiculed by John Heydon in *Advice to a Daughter* (1658); one Thomas Peck retorted with *Advice to Balaam's Ass*, which Heydon answered in a second edition of his *Daughter* (1659). Pepys quotes Petty as saying that the three most popular books of his time were Osborne's *Advice*, Browne's *Religio Medici*, and Butler's *Hudibras*. The quotation from Vanbrugh is from *The Provoked Wife*, 2. 1.

[12] Boswell quotes from memory Matthew Green's *The Spleen* (Dodsley's *Collection of Poems*, 1. 123); the poet makes the remark in his own person as a splenetic man "chatting away the gloomy fit" with gossiping ladies, not in any representation of *Scandal*. For Boswell's frequent references to this poem see *Hyp.* 5. The line from *Hudibras* occurs in Part 3, Canto 1.

appeared to me to be new as well as very poetical; but I find its prototype, or at least similitude, in an old song which begins

"Young Corydon and Phillis"—
"And greater bliss pursuing,
"He *wander'd* o'er her breast."[13]

Mr. Burke in his very ingenious Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, exhibits an excellence in Milton thus:

But darkness is more productive of sublime ideas than light. Our great poet was convinced of this; and indeed so full was he of this idea, so entirely possessed with the power of a well-managed darkness, that in describing the appearance of the Deity, amidst that profusion of magnificent images which the grandeur of his subject provokes him to pour out upon every side, he is far from forgetting the obscurity which surrounds the most incomprehensible of all beings, but

"With the majesty of *darkness* round
Circles his throne."[14]

This sublime circumstance is borrowed from a source with which Milton was well acquainted, the Psalms, where, after a triumphant proclamation that "The Lord reigneth," it is said, "Clouds and darkness are round about him."

In Goldsmith's beautiful little poem, *The Hermit*, there is a delicate philosophical sentiment:

"Man wants but little here below,
"Nor wants that little long."

Which is certainly borrowed from Dr. Young's Night Thoughts.

"Man wants but little, nor that little long."[15]

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[13] An incomplete rendering of *Zenobia* 3. 2—

Thus wander o'er him with my tears and kisses.

Boswell quotes *Young Corydon and Phillis*, which may be found in Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, from memory; *bliss* should be *joys*.

[14] Properly, the line (*Par. Lost*, 2. 266) runs,

. . . . with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne.

Boswell correctly restores the article before *majesty*; Burke had omitted it. The following passage from the *Psalms* is 97. 1–2.

[15] *Night Thoughts*, 4. The irregular punctuation is Boswell's own.

Goldsmith, I suppose, had got the line by heart; and it had afterward remained unperceived amongſt his own ſtore of poetical thoughts.

In Soame Jenyns's lively and agreeable defence of Chriſtianity, I read with pleasure the following conclusive and at the same time witty remark, that he who believes that the undoubted history of the Gospel happened without supernatural aſſiſtance, "must be possessed of much more faith than is necessary to make him a Chriſtian, and remain *an unbeliever from mere credulity*."

But this is either taken from Dr. Young's Night Thoughts, or is a clear coincidence with this:

—"How ſtrange
"To disbelieve thro' mere credulity!"[16]

These are two inſtances of borrowing, or imitation, or coincidence with Dr. Young. Many more I dare say might be discovered. But I found one pointed out where one would not have expected to find it—in a note upon a law book of more than ordinary merit—"*A Syſtem of the Principles of the Law of Scotland, by George Wallace, Advocate;*" a book which I am informed has been highly applauded by the present Lord Chief Juſtice,[17] and

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[16] *Night Thoughts*, 9. The "lively and agreeable defence" was published by Jenyns in 1776, after "having wandered in the wilds of infidelity" (*Life of J.*, 3. 317). See also *Life of J.*, 1. 365; 3. 56, 327. The book was warmly praised on its first appearance, but was later suspected of being ironical. Other works of Jenyns were *A Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil* (1755), which drew a reply from Johnson himself, and *Disquisitions*, for which see *Hyp.* 65.

[17] The "present Lord Chief Justice" was William Murray, first Earl of Mansfield (1705–1793), the first Scot to gain distinction through the law in England, and the life-long antagonist of Pitt, Earl of Chatham. He became Chief Justice in 1756, and in that post was the center of much discussion because of his decisions favorable to John Wilkes (cf. *Hyp.* 49), the heir of Lady Jane in the Douglas Cause, and a runaway negro; in the last instance, however, his opinion served to express England's feeling against slavery. Boswell had reason to rank Lord Mansfield high as judge and critic: the Chief Justice had favored causes in which Boswell was interested, in the first two cases mentioned, and he had praised Boswell's prologue for the *Earl of Essex* (*Letters of B.*, 1. 199).

Boswell is sure that the work praised by the noble lord deserves such applause.

which I am sure deserves to be applauded. He quotes the following lines on nature from Dr. Young's Universal Passion:

"In distant wild, by human eyes unseen,
"She rears her flowers and spreads her velvet green;
"Pure gurgling rills the lonely desert trace,
"And waste their musick on the savage race."

And then observes, "Mr. Gray, one of the greatest poets England ever produced, has the same thought something diversified in his Elegy. I would have transcribed his lines but many quotations are disgusting." I who have not the same niceness as to quotation which Mr. Wallace seems to have caught from other writers, shall now present my readers with Mr. Gray's stanza.

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
"The dark, unfathom'd caves of Ocean bear;
"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
"And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

The similarity is very strong, but Mr. Gray was certainly not conscious of it; for he does not insert it amongst the *Imitations* which he subjoined to an edition of his Poems, though he has been uncommonly attentive to mark the smallest coincidence with passages in other writings.

I have observed in Dr. Young's Night Thoughts two coincidences with passages in other authors:

"Alas! ambition *makes my little less*,"

is after this line in Dr. Johnson's London, a Poem:

"And every moment makes my little less."[18]

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because it was written by one of his own acquaintances, of whom he preserves an anecdote in *Boswelliana*, 278. Mr. Wallace may have attracted Boswell's attention because, like the Hypochondriack himself, he had a dislike for the profession of law. Aside from this book on Scots law (published 1760) he was the author of two works on the Scottish peerage, and a poem on Scottish landscape, which he wrote to give himself "an occasional relief from the austerity and vexations of a profession very remote from poetry." This fact accounts for his insertion of a note on poetry "where one would not have expected to find it."

[18] The quotation from Young (*Night Thoughts*, 4) affects Boswell's rendering of Johnson's line; it should be

And every moment *leaves* my little less.

And,

"Man makes a death which nature never made,
"And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one,"

is a compound imitation of Parnell and Shakespeare.[19]

"When men my scythe and darts supply,
"How great a king of fears am I."
Night Piece, on Death.

"Cowards die many times before their death."—*Julius Cæsar.*

It is an innocent entertainment to trace such similarities; and were a man to read much with that view only, he might make a large collection, for which I, and probably many others, should thank him. It occurred to me while looking into Statius, that his description of the morning star's appearing in different situations may be applied to the same thought starting up in different writers.

The description stands thus:

"*Lucifer*
"*Mutato nocturnus equo nec conscia fallit*
"*Sidera, et alterno deprenditur unus in ortu.*"

The passage which I have taken for my motto, *alterno deprenditur unus in ortu*, is quite expressive of the sameness being discovered in different appearances, the words *mutato equo* may well signify that the conveyance, the author, is changed; and *nec conscia sidera fallit* may be rendered, that the change does not escape the penetration of knowing criticks.

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[19] Boswell omits a line from Young (*Night Thoughts*, 4):

Man makes a death which nature never made,
Then on the point of his own fancy falls,
And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one.

The line from *Julius Caesar* occurs in 2. 2 . 32.

The irregular punctuation of the introduction to the quotations is reproduced as Boswell left it.

No. XXIII. Aug. 1779.

[ON RESERVE]

Dicenda tacendaque calles.—PERSIUS.[1]

"Well knowing what to utter, what suppress."

THE MOTTO of this paper is a part of the praise which Persius gives to a young man rising in eloquence, as a follower of the great Pericles. And so far as oratory depends upon art or judgement, nothing is of more importance to command success than that faculty of selection which the poet applauds.

A fullness and richness of thought and expression must, no doubt, be highly valued in a publick speaker. Like a picture upon a large scale which is intended for being viewed from a considerable distance, an orator's discourse should never be little or familiar; for, he is always to be held, if not above his audience, at least not near to them; so that his style and manner should be very different from that of common conversation, to which again the stateliness of eloquence is pompously disproportionate.

But the praise of knowing what to utter, and what to suppress, is still more to be desired by the man who would excel in common conversation, than by the orator. Less discrimination can be borne in publick than in private; the heat of animation, and the blaze of eloquence will make us insensible to improprieties which, when our minds are not wound up to such a pitch, are perceived with disgust.

I have always considered it to be a very great misfortune to be one of those people, who may be said to have no fanners in their minds with which they can winnow the grain from the chaff, so that all their thoughts of every sort are brought forth whatever may be the consequence. This with some is a natural defect, an absolute want of discernment. But I believe it is most frequently owing to an extreme degree of inattention and carelessness from not being habituated to any kind of correction.[2]

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[1] *Sat.*, 4. 5. In the first paragraph of the essay, the author's name was originally printed *Perseus*, and left uncorrected by Boswell.

[2] This appears at first to be a reference to Goldsmith—or possibly to Edmund Burke (*Life of J.*, 3. 280 n.). Both Boswell and Johnson describe Goldsmith as a careless, rattling talker:

Every child when not under restraint from shame or fear, utters his thoughts just as they arise in his mind, without obliging them to undergo any examination before they are allowed to pass; and it is only by instruction and experience that any of us attain to *retenú*, as the French well express the power of suppressing what it is improper to utter. In proportion therefore as a person has attained that habit, he may be considered as less childish.

The five years silence which was prescribed to his scholars by Pythagoras, before they were initiated in the mysteries of the Samian school, was intended to give them such a degree of self-command, that they probably would not become relaxed during all the remaining course of their lives. I own I have a respect for every kind of discipline, for every mode which men more intellectual than corporeal have invented for bringing human nature to a state of greater perfection in any particular.[3] I cannot therefore join in any ridicule of the Pythagorean silence; for let it be remembered that the young philosophers who observed it were not merely "slow to speak," but were also "swift to hear,"[4] so that while they were acquiring the management of their powers of communication, they were at the same time storing their minds with the treasures of knowledge.

He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*, and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly, without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. (*Life of J.*, 1. 478.)

Johnson. ". . . . It was with difficulty we could give him a hearing. Goldsmith had no settled notions upon any subject; so he talked always at random. It seemed to be his intention to blurt out whatever was in his mind, and see what would become of it. He was angry, too, when catched in an absurdity; but it did not prevent him from falling into another the next minute." (*Ibid.*, 3. 286.)

See also *ibid.*, 2. 213, 225; *Hebr.*, 315. The paragraphs which follow, however, show that Boswell is criticizing himself.

[3] Boswell's purpose of self-criticism is established by the resemblance between this impersonal passage and a parallel statement, much more personally expressed, in a letter to Temple in 1767 (*Letters of B.*, 1. 137):

I am always for fixing some period for my perfection as far as possible. Let it be when my *Account of Corsica* is published. I shall then have a character which I must support. I will swear like an ancient disciple of Pythagoras to observe silence; I will be grave and reserved, though chearful and communicative of what is *verum atque decens*. One great fault of mine is talking at random. I will guard against it.

The paragraph might serve as text for the whole series; see Introduction, I . 2. On the efficacy of discipline in general, see *Hyp.* 6, 9, 31, 39, 40, 64.

[4] *James*, 1. 19.

If pride be the passion in which a man takes most delight, he cannot gratify it more effectually than by reserve. *Shenstone* has left us a very good essay upon the different effects of reserve, and openness, or what is called a frankness of behaviour, and points out to us what we must all recollect to have observed, that the former never fails to procure respect.[5] Such is the weakness and imperfection of human nature, that it will not bear to be too closely examined in any character;[6] and therefore he who lays himself quite open will infallibly be lessened in the estimation of all around him.

But, too much indulgence of pride is a selfish gratification, inconsistent with that benevolence towards others which it is our duty to cultivate. We are commanded by one of the amiable precepts of our holy religion, "to do good, and to communicate."[7] And there can be no doubt, that a communication of intellectual advantages and of the enjoyments of kindness and good humour, is understood, as well as a communication of our wealth.

As, however, no man is to distribute to the necessities of the poor, till he reduces himself to beggary, so no man is to contribute to the happiness of others till he reduces himself to a state of

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[5] In this and the following paragraphs Boswell paraphrases Shenstone's prose maxims *On Reserve* without full acknowledgement; it is perhaps one of the cases in which he feels that his development of the original thought makes it all his own. Cf. the following:

A Person that would secure to himself great advantages will, perhaps, gain his point by silence, as effectually as by any thing he can say.

Virtues, like essences, lose their fragrance when exposed. They are sensitive plants which will not bear too familiar approaches.

To be . . . . a niggard of one's observations, is so much worse than to hoard up one's money, as the former may be both imparted and retained at the same time.

During the tour to the Hebrides, Boswell introduced these maxims for Johnson's consideration, and found himself again in disagreement with the sage (*Hebr.*, 304):

I observed that Shenstone, from his short maxims in prose, appeared to have some power of thinking; but Dr. Johnson would not allow him that merit.

Dr. Johnson had not, like Boswell, any personal application to make of the maxims in prose!

[6] Boswell's fear of minute examination, either of life or ideas, is expressed again in *Hyp.* 24, 37, 65.

[7] *Heb.*, 13. 16.

contempt.[8] Besides, a man who gives his goods or his money may be certain that he is conferring a benefit on the receiver. But a man who thinks he is very liberal in other respects may be exceedingly mistaken in this. His liberality in giving advice may be an insult. His liberality in giving his time and his conversation may be a burthen which nothing but inviolable good manners would prevent those to whom he is so liberal from throwing off with impatient resentment.[9]

We cannot therefore prescribe to ourselves any certain general rules which will be applicable to all occasions; but must regulate our conduct according to circumstances. Sometimes our benevolence will be best exercised in talking, and sometimes in listening, just as we find the humour of those with whom we are at the time. I write to the ordinary run of mankind. For, there does to be sure now and then appear an extraordinary man, by whom all should be willing to be instructed and entertained. Of such a man London can boast in the present age. I shall not name him; because if the description does not present him to the minds of any of my readers as much as his name could do, they are unfortunate enough either

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[8] Cf. *Life of J.*, 2. 287:

JOHNSON. "Sir, you must consider that we have perfect and imperfect obligations. Perfect obligations, which are generally not to do something, are clear and positive; as, 'thou shalt not kill.' But charity, for instance, is not definable by limits. It is a duty to give to the poor; but no man can say how much another should give to the poor, or when a man has given too little to save his soul. In the same manner it is a duty to instruct the ignorant, and of consequence to convert infidels to Christianity; but no man in the common course of things is obliged to carry this to such a degree as to incur the danger of martyrdom, as no man is obliged to strip himself to the shirt in order to give charity."

[9] Boswell was somewhat nervous from time to time lest his eagerness to offer his compliments to the great be construed unfavorably; cf. *Hebr.*, 245:

My fellow-traveller and I talked of going to Sweden; and . . . . I expressed a pleasure in the prospect of seeing the king. JOHNSON. "I doubt, Sir, if he would speak to us." Colonel M'Leod said, "I am sure Mr. Boswell would speak to *him*." But, seeing me a little disconcerted by his remark, he politely added, "and with great propriety." Here let me offer a short defence of that propensity in my disposition, to which this gentleman alluded. It has procured me much happiness. I hope it does not deserve so hard a name as either forwardness or impudence. If I know myself, it is nothing more than an eagerness to share the society of men distinguished either by their rank or their talents, and a diligence to attain what I desire. If a man is praised for seeking knowledge, though mountains and seas are in his way, may he not be pardoned, whose ardour, in the pursuit of the same object, leads him to encounter difficulties as great, though of a different kind?

He was consoled by Johnson's approval (*Life of J.*, 2. 514). For instances of his persistence, see *Letters of B.*, 1. 58, 63, 66, 87, 111, 156, 193; 2. 274, 320.

not to know him, or not to be sensible of what the most distinguished of his contemporaries acknowledge.[10]

Although pride be in one sense a disagreeable and even a culpable quality, a decent attention to the dignity of human nature is wise and laudable. "To know myself a man," was the high-minded wish of our late lyrick bard *Gray*,[11] who, I am told by those who knew him intimately, had an uncommon elevation of sentiment and behaviour. By comparing ourselves with others whom we think inferior to us, we become haughty; but by comparing ourselves with that standard of excellence of which we may all have an idea, we shall be raised to a degree of loftiness by looking upwards, and yet be modest from a consciousness of our deficiency. Talkativeness is quite unsuitable to such a character. A man who speaks whatever comes uppermost, who throws out the dross of his mind equally, or indeed, as must always happen, more abundantly than the refined ore, can never be respected. Nay, supposing a man to excel ever so much in talking, and to indulge himself in a constant volubility of discourse, he would sink in our estimation.[12] The value of his conversation would be debased by its quantity, as cheapness is ever the consequence of plenty. It is said that when the Dutch merchants return home to their harbours with ships richly laden with spices, if they find that

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[10] This person is Dr. Johnson, of course. It is possible that Boswell uses *benevolence* to indicate politeness in this paragraph because of Johnson's remark that politeness was "fictitious benevolence" (cf. *Hyp.* 20 n. 13).

[11] Boswell quotes the last line of the *Hymn to Adversity*. For other quotations from Gray, see *Hyp.* 21, 22, 51, 61. On the subject of his poetry Boswell and Johnson were in complete disagreement; see *Hyp.* 67 n. 18, and *Life of J.*, 1. 466 ff.; 2. 188, 374. Johnson's attitude in his prejudiced *Life of Gray* is balanced by an enthusiastic passage in one of Boswell's *Letters* (1. 183):

. . . . I am affected with much melancholy on the death of Mr. Gray. His *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* has been long like part of myself; and many passages in his other poems glance across my soul with a most enlivening force.

[12] Cf. *Hyp.* 44, on prudence, and *Boswelliana*, 212, in which Boswell is obviously thinking of his own defect:

Boswell said that a man is reckoned a wise man rather for what he does not say than for what he says [Shenstone again?]. Perhaps upon the whole Limbertongue speaks a greater quantity of good sense than Manly does. But Limbertongue gives you such floods of frivolous nonsense that his sense is quite drowned. Manly gives you unmixed good sense only. Manly will always be thought the wiser of the two.

See also *ibid.*, 254.

the price is low from the market being overſtocked, they will throw cinnamon and other valuable articles into the sea, till by rendering the commodities scarce, they can sell them sufficiently dear. A man need not thus waſte his conversation; but by reserving part of it for other occasions he may secure it from being undervalued.

The advice which I am now wishing to enforce, is, I confess, not easily to be practised, especially by myself and others who are subject to *Hypochondria;* for, although at the time when I ushered myself into notice as the author of these papers, I was flattered with the persuasion that the clouds of my existence were paſt, and that I retained only the *title* of *Hypochondriack*, I have since experienced the malignity of the foul fiend. An Hypochondriack is sometimes so totally incapable of conversation, having a mind like an exhauſted receiver, and organs of speech as if palsied, that when his ideas and his vivacity return, effusion is a pleasure to him, in which he can hardly resiſt an excess of indulgence. But, let him consider that by dissipating his spirits he is preparing himself for languor, dejection, and pain; and let him therefore provide againſt future attacks by saving his ſtores. Let him also consider that he runs a great risque of discovering circumſtances which his enemies may afterwards employ againſt him, and which in his hours of gloomy sensibility it will be a torment to him to recolleſt.[13]

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[13] See also *Hyp.* 4, 26, 37, 40, 55, 64, 70; *Life of J.*, 3. 280; *Hebr.*, 352; *Letters of B.*, 1. 151, 220; 2. 405, 427. For the gaiety of the hypochondriac, see especially, *Letters*, 1. 223:

> It gives me acute pain that I have not written more to you since we parted laſt. But I have been like a skiff on the sea, driven about by a multiplicity of waves. I am now at Mr. Thrale's villa at Streatham—a delightful spot. . . . . I am in that dissipated ſtate of mind that I absolutely cannot write. I at leaſt imagine so. But while I glow with gayety, I feel friendship for you . . . . as ſtrong as you could wish.

Boswell's injunction against "discovering circumſtances" of an unfavorable nature may have been derived from Johnson (*Life of J.*, 2. 540):

> Johnson. ". . . . A man should be careful never to tell tales of himself to his own disadvantage. People may be amused and laugh at the time, but they will be remembered, and brought out againſt him upon some subsequent occasion."

Whenever Boswell told a story against himself in Johnson's presence, it was sooner or later used against him as a repressive measure; see note on Goliahs in argument, *Hyp.* 34.

Contrast to all these statements, *Hyp.* 25, on the need of gaiety.

It is not however against too much speaking only that I would guard my readers, and particularly my Hypochondriack brethren. The motto of my paper which I always look upon as a text, reminds me of the choice of what is to be uttered, which is indeed of essential consequence to the happiness of social life. Such of my readers as wish to see the subject treated in a serious manner, with a view to consequences more aweful than it is my purpose at present to introduce, may consult that valuable treatise, entitled *The Government of the Tongue*.[14] But there are motives enough independent of religion, for prudence and delicacy of speech.

It frequently happens that people are troubled with a kind of vanity which makes them desirous rather to be conspicuous for faults than not to be conspicuous at all; and it is a wretched mistake to think that a supposed candour in owning ones faults will prevent the censure which they deserve; for on the contrary it will only bring ridicule in addition to censure. This truth should be ever kept in mind, and a great deal of unpleasing conversation will be avoided. Besides, to hear a confession of faults is offensive, unless from a friend to whom our counsel may be of service, as a display of the symptoms of a disease is offensive when we can apply no remedy.[15] But it is still worse when one of those

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[14] Probably by Richard Allestree, Regius Professor of Divinity, Oxford, and Provost of Eton; see Birkbeck Hill's notes to *Life of J.*, 3. 431; 2. 275. Boswell's inscription in his copy of the work is further evidence that in this number of *The Hypochondriack* he is speaking of his own prominent faults:

> JAMES BOSWELL
> London 1779
>
> Presented to me by my worthy friend Bennet Langton Esq. of Langton, as a Book by which I might be much improved, viz by The Government of the Tongue. He gave me the Book and hoped I would read that treatise; but said no more. I have expressed in words what I beleive was his meaning. It was a delicate admonition.

Boswell accepted the admonition. In the *Life of J.*, 3. 432 he records having checked a burst of ridicule on the part of Johnson and himself by quoting from "that very pious book," as he calls it. See *Hyp.* 62 n. 7.

[15] Cf. a letter of Johnson to Boswell (*Life of J.*, 3. 478):

> You are always complaining of melancholy, and I conclude from those complaints that you are fond of it. No man talks of that which he is desirous to conceal, and every man desires to conceal that of which he is ashamed. Do not pretend to deny it; *manifestum habemus furem*; make it an invariable and obligatory law to yourself, never to mention your

unreserved confessors imagines that his frankness gives him a title to bring into view the faults of those with whom he happens to be in company. By giving attention to the different characters of our companions we soon come to know what circumstances about themselves they consider to be unfavourable; and these we should shun to mention, if we wish to have them easy and to possess their good will. An Hypochondriack ought to be chiefly upon his guard. For though he is not cruel, there is an irritation in his frame which makes him rather pleased with seeing the slighter sort of uneasiness which is produced by raillery. But this is very dangerous, and is apt to increase, so that I have seen several instances in conversation of that character which the poet calls "The best good man with the worst natured muse."[16]

Above all we ought to guard against carrying personal reflexions from one company to another. There is a tacit contract in social life that what is said in company without any direct purpose is not to be repeated. *Horace* says, with beautiful justness, "*Est & fideli tuta silentio merces*—There is a safe reward in faithful silence."[17] And every body is sensible that a tale-bearer, whether urged on by malevolence or run away with by heedlessness, does

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own mental diseases; if you are never to speak of them, you will think on them but little, and if you think little of them, they will molest you rarely. When you talk of them, it is plain that you want either praise or pity; for praise there is no room, and pity will do you no good; therefore, from this hour speak no more, think no more, about them.

In conversation, Boswell was driven to attempt an answer (*ibid.*, 3. 368):

Johnson. ". . . . All censure of a man's self is oblique praise. It is in order to shew how much he can spare. It has all the invidiousness of self-praise, and all the reproach of falsehood." Boswell. "Sometimes it may proceed from a man's strong consciousness of his faults being observed. He knows that others would throw him down, and therefore he had better lye down softly of his own accord."

This struck him as so just that he preserved it in *Boswelliana*, 291. It is to be observed that the suggested excuse is not allowed a place in the essay.

[16] Rochester, *Satires in Imitation of Horace*, 1. 10. One of the instances which Boswell had noted was himself; see the parallel description of himself in *Hebr.*, 58:

His imagination being lively, he often said things of which the effect was very different from the intention. He resembled sometimes

"The best good man, with the worst natur'd muse."

See also the advice to those who are too fond of ridicule, *Hyp.* 62 and notes.

[17] *Carm.*, 3. 2 . 25.

more mischief than any other character. I have often thought that tale-bearing might be checked by similar regulations with those which are established as to bills of exchange. He whose name is last put to a story should first be answerable; and let him have recourse upon those through whom it has been conveyed to him.[18]

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[18] Cf. *The School for Scandal*, 2. 2:

Mrs. Candour: But surely you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

Sir Peter: Yes, Madam, I would have law merchant for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

No. XXIV. Sept. 1779.

[ON CENSURE]

Non possumus videre nostra mala
Alii simul delinquunt censores sumus.—PHÆDRUS.[1]

"Though our own faults we never can descry,
"We see our neighbours' with the quickest eye."

THE FANCY of the ancient fabulist, that Jupiter formed man with one bag before into which the faults of others are put, and another behind, in which are put his own faults, so that while the latter are hid from him, the former are always full in his view, is certainly somewhat coarse and clumsy. If the merit of an image is to be tried, as some have maintained, by giving it a visible form in painting,[2] the figure would appear abundantly aukward, and look rather like a Dutch than a Grecian emblem. The man thus depicted with two opposite bunches, would indeed resemble the portrait which is given us of honest Æsop himself. But the allegorical instruction meant to be conveyed, would approach the mind in a very gross vehicle.

The moral however of this apologue is just and excellent, and Phædrus, who cannot be condemned as arrogant for saying that he has given a polish to the materials of his predecessor, has placed it before us in that elegant simplicity peculiar to himself.

Holding this counterposition of faults to be natural to man, might it not be considered if he has power to amend it? Pursuing the emblematical plan, might we not describe him as turning his

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[1] *Fab.*, 4. 10.

[2] Part of the fashionable theory of the *picturesque*, which affected many of the arts and delights of the eighteenth century, from poetry to gardening, until it was checked by the famous satire, *Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque* (1809–1812). See Manwaring, *Italian Landscape in the 18th Century*, 17 ff., 167; Reynolds, *Nature in English Poetry from Pope to Wordsworth*; Texte, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit in Literature*, 3. 3. 1. Walpole's description of the park at Hagley shows the excess to which the notion of natural scenery arranged in pictorial composition could go (*Letters*, 2. 352):

> Then there is a scene of a small lake, with cascades falling down such a Parnassus! with a circular temple on the distant eminence; and there is such a fairy dale, with more cascades gushing out of rocks! and there is a hermitage, so exactly like those in Sadeler's prints, on the brow of a shady mountain! . . . . and there is such a pretty well under a wood, like the Samaritan woman's in a picture of Nicolò Poussin!

head backwards till he sees his own failings? or as perceiving them by the reflexion of a looking-glass? I am always for animating human nature to hopes of improvement by art and assiduity, which we know have in so many instances effected what would be considered as wonders were we not gradually habituated to them.

I am afraid that to delight in censure is the general propensity of mankind. For, in the observations which I have made upon life, I have found very few who were free from it. Some indeed possessed of superior sagacity, having seen that a censurer is odious, have address enough to disguise their malevolence, and contrive that others shall be the actors while they imperceptibly prompt. And some who take no active part whatever, are nevertheless exceedingly pleased to be of the audience. Whether or not Hobbes be right in his system, that men are born in a state of war,[3] it seems to be pretty clear that they are so far addicted to hostility, as to tear in pieces each others characters. We doubted of the truth of what was related of the existence of Cannibals, till it was confirmed to us by unquestionable authority in our own time. Yet to have a pleasure in eating human flesh is not in itself more repugnant to humanity, than to have a pleasure in mangling and destroying the reputation of our fellow-creatures. A man suffers less by having his body devoured after he is dead, than by having his good name ruined while he is alive.[4]

A good name is held in a higher degree of estimation in proportion as we recede from barbarism, and advance in knowledge and civilization. The wise and enlightened monarch whose proverbs make a part of our sacred volume, says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." And what is thus deliv-

[3] In his *Leviathan* (1651). This theory was frequently discussed in Boswell's day; Hume thinks it worth his while to make a note controverting it, in his essay *Concerning the Principles of Morals* (*Essays*, ed. Green and Grose, 2. 184 n. 1):

This fiction of a state of nature as a state of war, was not first started by Mr. Hobbes, as is commonly imagined. Plato endeavors to refute an hypothesis very like it in the 2d, 3d, and 4th books de republica [*sic*]. Cicero on the contrary, supposes it certain and universally acknowledged in . . . . *Pro Sext.*, 1. 42.

[4] Cf. Montaigne, *Of Cannibals* (Cotton's translation):

For I conceive, there is more barbarity in Eating a Man Alive, than when he is Dead; in tearing a Body Limb from Limb, by Wracks and Torments, that is yet in perfect Sense, in Roasting it by degrees, causing it to be bit and worried by Dogs and Swine . . . . than to Roast and Eat him after he is Dead.

The idea is repeated in his essay *Of Cruelty*, in shorter form.

ered with authority by Solomon, is expanded and illustrated by Shakespeare in the following celebrated passage:[5]

> "Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
> Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
> Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
> 'Twas mine, 'tis his; and has been slave to thousands:
> But he that filches from me my good name,
> Robs me of that which not enriches him,
> And makes me poor indeed."

How unaccountable then is it that people who are conscientious enough in other respects should be so little scrupulous in attacking their neighbours characters. It is true, that robbing another of his good name does not enrich the guilty person in reality. But a false notion is entertained, that by lessening the number of good characters, one's own may be more highly valued; so that if laughter be owing to pride, as certain philosophers have maintained,[6] grave detraction is much more to be ascribed to the same cause. Indeed we often find those who are denominated rigidly virtuous are remarkable for being censorious. Their virtue being only what is austere in duty, not what is mild and benevolent, so that they are truely but half virtuous, and that too without having the best half, they are disposed to lessen the merit of others, especially when it is of that kind in which they are deficient. But the most diabolical motive for censure, is the consciousness of faults and imperfections, joined with a dastardly acquiescence in them, instead of having generous resolutions of growing better. Persons in that wretched state are shocked by the excellence of worthy and shining characters; and therefore wish, if possible, to annihilate the belief of what they despair of attaining, that they may not suffer by comparison. And it is to be lamented that they are but too successful in darkening both their own minds and those of others. The generality of men must have experienced how naturally, after a series of bad conduct, the mind endeavours to sooth itself with the opiate of thinking that probably others are

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[5] *Prov.*, 22. 1, and *Othello*, 3. 2 . 155.

[6] Hobbes, in his *Human Nature* (1640–50). See also *The Rambler*, 2. *The Spectator* repudiates the idea in numbers 47, 249; Goldsmith makes a heated answer to it in *The Bee*, 7. Boswell is "certain it is not true" in *Hyp.* 62.

no better than we, though we have not discovered their deviations; and, by and by, we proceed to diffuse in conversation that benumbning suspicion. Whenever therefore I hear a man eager in general indiscriminate abuse of human nature, alledging that there is no true spirit, or friendship, or honesty, or piety to be found, I conclude that if he has not been miserably unfortunate, he is debased and wicked in an extreme degree.[7]

Deliberately to invent and propagate falsehoods, essentially injurious to the character of another, is dreadful malignity. But I own I admire the maxim of the *Roman* law "*Quod veritas convicii non excusat;*—that the truth of defamation should not excuse it." For, to expose and bring into more general notice such faults as a man really has, is a cruel injury, and should not be justified unless it can be shown that it was necessary to be done, to prevent a greater evil; such as when an opinion is to be given, whether a man is fit for an employment of important trust; or one is called upon to speak to a character upon oath. It is under the pretext of such utility that censorious men, assuming a portion of jurisdiction, indulge their malevolence for the alledged good of the community. They argue with a plausibility which I believe often imposes upon themselves, that it is the interest of society to have the unworthy detected and punished, and that loss of character is their just punishment. But if punishments be of use in society, rewards are certainly so also. Those publick spirited people therefore would be more consistent, if they were equally assiduous in finding out merit, and giving it the praise which it deserves, and which tends so much to cherish and increase it.

Even allowing the principle of utility its full weight[8] to infer that the reward and punishment of good and bad fame should ever obtain, a man of an amiable disposition would not surely wish to be the executioner. For, in all countries, those who actually

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[7] Hard words for Boswell's dear Rousseau. See also the anonymous reference (Birkbeck Hill thinks, to Baretti) in *Life of J.*, 2. 9:

> I told him that a foreign friend of his, whom I had met with abroad, was so wretchedly perverted to infidelity, that he treated the hopes of humanity with brutal levity. . . . . I added, that this man said to me, "I hate mankind, for I think myself one of the best of them, and I know how bad I am." JOHNSON. "Sir, he must be very singular in his opinion, if he thinks himself one of the best of men; for none of his friends think him so."

[8] For other references to utility, see *Hyp.* 13, 27, 37.

inflict punishments, however wisely ordered, are more or less despised and detested. If a character is imperceptibly blasted by the continued breaths of thousands, it has its fate from the general operation of opinion. But I would not be distinguished as more violent in the storm than others. There is something in censure so opposite to gentleness of temper that no man who is remarkable for it will ever be loved. Men of certain employments which require a disposition remote from tenderness, are, we know, not allowed to sit as jurymen in cases of life or death. I really think that a notorious censurer or satyrist should also be excepted.

But it is not only in such severe censure as is totally destructive of the characters of others, that people are prone to indulge themselves. Many a one would shrink back from so deep an injury, who would not startle at lesser degress of hurt. And indeed it is against that wantonness of censure which is so common, that I am most desirous to guard my readers. It is really provoking to a candid, benevolent mind to observe low people in almost every company attack the characters of some who are absent, nay, of their own friends as they call them, as soon as they are gone. It was a bull to be sure in an honest brave Irishman, but there was a very just meaning in it, when he said, upon being asked why he sat still in a company long after the hour at which he had an appointment somewhere else, "Why, I observed that whenever any body went away his character was immediately attacked, so I stayed to be ready to defend myself."

I have often wondered to find scandal prevail so much amongst the fair-sex, whose delicacy one should suppose would prevent them from what is in effect so barbarous. But I sometimes consider a drawing-room to be like a theatre of surgery, where patients are mangled in various ways. Or, as they are not present, it may perhaps be better compared to a haunt of witches, where the objects of their malignity are tormented in effigy.

All who reflect upon their own infirmities should be sparing of other people, that they themselves may be spared; and thus by mutual indulgence the general stock of benevolence will be augmented. On the contrary, by accustoming ourselves to censoriousness, we shall every day grow less kindly one towards another, and each is proportionally a loser. *Pope*, when elated with the pride of a lofty satyrist, boasts

"No, while I live no rich or noble knave
"Shall walk in peace and credit to his grave."

But Pope, when in his best frame, prays

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see.[9]

There may be two good reasons given for hiding faults which we think we see in our neighbours. We may be mistaken; in which case an unjust sentence is not easily remedied; and if we are right, they perhaps may be endeavouring to correct what is wrong; and it would be very hard that while thus struggling they should be crushed.

For my own part, I look upon it as a great misfortune to be quick-sighted to the faults and imperfections of others. It is the great study of civilized life to promote good-humour and complacency, by making ourselves and every thing about us appear as agreeable as we can; for which reason we endeavour to keep out of sight whatever is imperfect and offensive; and our inventions are exercised in multiplying modes of cleanliness and ornament. *Swift* has shown us to a degree of exquisite disgust the consequence of prying, when we ought to be satisfied with external beauty of person and dress. If we will set ourselves to investigate in his manner, we all know what nauseous ideas will be excited;[10] yet happily for us how very seldom are we disturbed by them as our views skim pleasingly along the surface. In the same manner we ought to conduct ourselves as to mental qualities; and not be always examining nicely into the characters of our neighbours. We might as well have their bodies put to the test of physick, as

[9] Boswell quotes from memory *Sat.*, I. 119–120:

Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave
Shall walk the world, in credit, to his grave.

Pope is "in his best frame" in the *Universal Prayer*, 37–38. The allusion is made again in *Hyp.* 29.

[10] *Gulliver's Travels, Brobdingnag*, chaps. 1, 5. Cf. Boswell's use of the same allusion in *Boswelliana*, 286:

Few characters will bear the examination of reason. You may examine them for curiosity, as you examine bodies with a microscope. But you will be as much disgusted with their gross qualities. You will see them as Swift makes Gulliver see the skins of the ladies of Brobdingnag.

See also *Hyp.* 23, 37, 53 n. 2, 65, for Boswell's dislike of close examination of anything.

their minds to the test of morality. It is said that no man is in perfect health; and it will be admitted that no man is completely virtuous. If a man has any infectious or loathsome disease, it is evident, and we shun him. A similar remark is to be made if he has any capital vice. But they who are perpetually probing for faults and imperfections, whether of body or mind, are surely very unhappy. An acquaintance of mine told me that he was much pleased in the company of a very pretty agreeable woman. But after leaving her, and mentioning this to an anatomist who had been along with him, the anatomist observed "Her muscles are no better than blubber." A prying moralist is very apt to make similar remarks upon character. He goes to a gentleman's house in the country, and meets with a chearful, hospitable reception; but when he comes away he suggests that probably this cheerfulness[11] was forced, and that there was a good deal of selfish vanity in the entertainment; or perhaps he finds out that the gentleman is not much of a scholar, that he is indifferent about his wife, and by no means liberal to his son.

I believe upon the whole, that he who would pass his life comfortably should not only abstain from censure, but habituate himself to take things in the most agreeable view; and by no means to search for faults.[12] I have observed that no persons are less happy themselves, or more disliked by others than those who are continually examining and inquiring with a nice keenness; and instead of being satisfied with good plain general enjoyment of society, are upon every occasion analysing people's characters.

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[11] The inconsistent spelling of *chearful, cheerfulness,* is Boswell's own; he left it uncorrected. (Cf. *Hyp.* 55 n. 7.) Possibly his attention was entirely taken up by the apostrophes, which appear in this essay with unusual precision. It is characteristic of *The Hypochondriack* to omit them.

[12] Cf. *Hyp.* 7, 59, 67, in which Boswell observes that he prefers to admire rather than to find fault. His naïve reason for such feeling appears in the *Life of J.*, **2**. 417:

Boswell. "No quality will get a man more friends than a disposition to admire the qualities of others. I do not mean flattery, but a sincere admiration."

No. XXV. Oct. 1779.

[ON DIVERSION]

καὶ μὴν μετεῖχε μὲν ἥδιστα παιδικῶν λόγων, συνεσπούδαζε δὲ πᾶν ὅ τι δέοι φίλοις. διὰ δὲ τὸ εὔελπις καὶ εὔθυμος καὶ ἀεὶ ἱλαρὸς εἶναι πολλοὺς ἐποίει μὴ τοῦ διαπράξασθαί τι μόνον ἕνεκα πλησιάζειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ ἥδιον διημερεύειν.—XENOPHON.[1]

"He freely let himself out with his intimates in a flow of conversation which had even a boyish simplicity; though when it was necessary he could apply to serious business with his friends, with intense diligence. And as he was always full of good hopes, and of a lively and chearful mind, many people came about him not from any view of interest but that they might pass the day more happily in his company."

OF THE many valuable records of human nature which have been preserved from remote antiquity through a series of ages down to the time in which we live, there is none which pleases me more than the character of Agesilaus, as drawn by Xenophon. In all the writings of Xenophon there is a beautiful simplicity which is not only agreeable in its manner, but also materially estimable for its being a certain indication of truth; so that while we read, we can trust with salutary confidence to the information which is communicated to us. Instances of excellence of whatever kind will not do us essential good if we know or even suspect that they are but the fictions of imagination: but if we are assured that they are real, we may hope to attain to what others of our species have actually been. Horace in enumerating the various instructions which may be derived from Homer, observes,

> "*Quid virtus et quid sapientia possit*
> "*Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulyssen.*"
>
> "What virtue and what wisdom join'd may reach,
> "He makes Ulysses' great example teach."

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[1] *Agesilaus*, 8. 2. This essay is probably the result of long, long thoughts on favorite authorities; cf. *The Rambler*, 44; *The Spectator*, 93, 102; *Life of J.*, 3. 460. See also, for discussion of moderation and balanced activity, *Hyp.* 4, 40, 54.

The magazine text for this passage gave μεν for μὴν; συνεστπονδασε for συνεσπούδαζε; φολοις for φίλοις; ἥδζον for ἥδιον; and omitted the accents from δὲ, ἱλαρὸς εἶναι, πολλοὺς, μὴ, διαπράξασθαι, πλησιάζειν, τοῦ, and διημερεύειν. Boswell made no corrections.

But, as Homer's work is a poem, to the truth of which we cannot give credit, his character of Ulysses can operate only as exciting high ideas of human excellence; whereas Xenophon's character of Agesilaus affords us the encouragement of knowing that such excellence has indeed existed.[2]

The circumstance in the character of Agesilaus which I have selected for a motto to this paper, is peculiarly delightful to the mind of an Hypochondriack. That versatility of mental faculties which enabled him to unite the most serious business with the lightest amusement is very cheering to an imagination which shrinks from important affairs with a desponding apprehension of incapacity to persevere, yet fears to be without occupation, lest the hours of vacancy should be infested with gloomy fretfulness.[3] The alternate succession of business and amusement which filled up the life of Agesilaus, is what will certainly constitute happiness, and which it is to be hoped every thinking man may by habitual exertion enjoy.

It is a very erroneous, though a very common notion, that every man should have a constant uniformity of character; whereas it is in the mingling of diversities that happiness consists. It is laid down with the positiveness of an axiom, that although in the season of youth we may be sportive and gay, we must be totally changed if we mean to maintain the dignity of manhood. We must then bid adieu to levity, and assume a settled grave deportment. This in a certain degree is true. In the greatest proportion of his time there is no doubt that a man who no longer thinks and understands as a child, should "put away child-

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[2] This passage is important as an expression of Boswell's faith in the value of biography; cf. *Hyp.* 6, 35. *The Spectator*, 490, contains a comparable reflection on true stories.

The quotation from Horace is *Epist.*, 1. 2 . 17.

[3] Cf. *Hyp.* 6, 39, 70, and notes; *Letters of B.*, 1. 15—

I am . . . . to hear the lectures on civil law and put myself on the plan of acquiring a habit of study and application. Too much of that would be bad for me. But idleness is still worse. . . . .

and 2. 271—

I earnestly desire tranquillity . . . . but I fear I shall never attain it: for when unoccupied I grow gloomy, and occupation agitates me to feverishness.

See also *ibid.*, 2. 378.

ish things."[4] Yet unless where the constitution is very rigid indeed, I believe that a man will not enjoy his existence with sufficient relish, unless he is at times in some respects as youthful as ever.

How agreeable is it to consider that so great a man as Agesilaus "let himself out with his intimates in a flow of conversation which had even a boyish simplicity," while such an innocent indulgence was by no means incompatible with his resuming whenever it was necessary, all that intellectual force for which he was so much distinguished. Is not his character as thus exhibited more to be admired than that of our great prime minister Sir Robert Walpole, in whom Pope contrasts felicity with greatness.

> "Seen him I have but in his happier hour
> "Of social pleasure ill exchanged for power."[5]

Agesilaus did not exchange social pleasure for power, but enjoyed them both without suffering one to encroach on the other.

No general rule can be prescribed for the management of the human mind. There are such varieties in our species that some men require more amusement than others, and the useful degrees of it must be ascertained by every one's own experience. This much however I can with firmness say, that he who does not require some amusement, and that too of the lighter kinds, has a very dull life however stately it may be: and in addition to the example of Agesilaus, I could adduce many living instances of high characters in different departments, who find their wisdom enlivened and invigorated by interspersing scenes of pleasantry and frolick.

Wretched is the state of an Hypochondriack whose distem-

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[4] *1 Cor.*, 13. 11.

[5] Pope, *Epil. to the Satires*, 1. 30. Sir Robert Walpole, first Earl of Orford (1676–1745) was Whig prime minister of England 1721–1742; his power was based on his effort to establish sound finance at home and peace abroad. He inherited jovial tendencies from his father, a country squire, and delighted in hunting—it is said he always opened his huntsman's letters first. His laughter was boisterous, and he "talked bawdy at his table" (*Life of J.*, 3. 66). *Robin of Bagshot, Bluff Bob*, etc., in the *Beggar's Opera* are meant to be hits at Walpole, and the song "How happy could I be with either" was understood to satirize his position between his wife and his mistress, Molly Skerrett (Melville, *Life and Letters of John Gay*).

pered pride makes him imagine that he is to preserve incessant dignity of decorum in behaviour.[6] A Bramin who condemns himself to remain perpetually in one posture does not suffer more pain than the Hypochondriack who remains in continual uneasy elevation, and is for ever galled by the fetters of correctness.

Nothing should be reckoned desireable in itself, but be esteemed only as it produces happiness. This simple maxim I am persuaded may greatly increase the quantity of human felicity. If fancied dignity without any immediate pleasure, but on the contrary much pain, cannot be shown to have a tendency to future enjoyment it ought surely to be avoided. And above all men an Hypochondriack has most need of amusement. For as the strongest spirits must be diluted with the greatest quantity of water, the thick, atrabilious thoughts of an Hypochondriack must have a greater degree of cheerfulness infused into them.

One of the instructive apologues of antiquity is "*Æsop at play.*"[7] When that sagacious fabulist was found keenly engaged in childish diversion with some boys, his apology was, "A bow that is always bent will break." But in the fragments of Publius Syrus, another slave whose talents procured him his freedom, and who was an eminent contemporary of Cicero, we have this sentence: "Extension spoils a bow; relaxation the mind." At first there seems here to be a direct contradiction between these ancient allegorical teachers; as indeed an allegory may be turned by ingenuity into different senses. But we shall find that the lessons of both are very just. The bow if not sometimes extended will break; but if extended too long, will become useless. So is it as to the relaxation of the mind. Every man must judge for himself how much relaxation and what mode of relaxation does him most good.

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[6] Contrast to this essay Boswell's censure of the frivolous man in *Hyp.* 23, his support of prudence in *Hyp.* 44, and his grave assertion in *Hyp.* 64 that the fixed character is not necessarily dull. In the arguments for variation and gaiety in this essay Boswell slackens the moral rein for a moment, and pleads for his own natural tastes and habit of mind. He does it again in the essays on country life, especially *Hyp.* 37. See also *Boswelliana*, 285.

[7] Phaedrus, *Fab.*, 3. 14. *The Spectator*, 102, alludes to the same fable. Boswell repeats the allusion in describing Johnson's labors with the dead cat in the cascade at Ashbourne (*Life of J.*, 3. 217).

There is, no doubt, as the wise man tells us, "a time for all things,"[8] and while I am inculcating gay relaxation with the same earneſtness which is generally employed in inculcating grave aſſiduity, I do moſt certainly not mean to recommend relaxation at random. The Roman poet says, "*Dulce eſt desipere in loco*—It is agreeable to play the fool in a proper place,"[9] or, to express it fully in the English idiom, "time and place convenient." I would add to time and place, *convenientia personæ*—something suitable to character. For, the relaxation of one person should be very different from the relaxation of another. I would not have a judge give way to an impulse of animal spirits, and be a merry fellow while he is upon the bench, nor would I have him dance in a publick assembly-room; and indeed a person of that grave dignity of ſtation should be seen in his hours of amuſement but by very few, as there are very few who can diſtinguish the subſtantial general character itself from the occasional appearances which it assumes. Still more should a clergyman be upon his guard againſt having the moſt innocent levity of behaviour in him seen by others. For as the usefulness of his office depends much upon the weight of authority which opinion gives him, it is his duty to take care that that opinion be not lessened. Levity of behaviour in him, if not in excess, is clearly no evil in respect to himself only, and therefore he may indulge it in private. But it is an evil in respect to others, in whose imaginations the venerable impression of the sacred character muſt not be at all effaced. There is a noted ſtory that Dr. Clarke, the celebrated metaphyſician, and one or two more eminent men of his time, were diverting themselves quite in a playful manner; but when Clarke perceived a certain beau approaching, he inſtantly made a tranſition to composed decorum, calling out with admirable good sense "Come, my boys, let's be grave: there comes a fool."[10] There

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[8] *Eccl.*, 3. 1.

[9] Horace, *Odes.*, 4. 12 . 28.

[10] Cf. Boswell's use of this anecdote in his dedication of the *Life of Johnson* to Sir Joshua Reynolds:

It is related of the great Dr. Clarke, that when in one of his leisure hours he was unbending himself with a few friends in the moſt playful and frolicsome manner, he observed Beau Nash approaching; upon which he suddenly ſtopped:—"My boys, (said he,) let us be grave: here comes a fool."

cannot be a better illustration than this of my opinion as to the prudent conduct of relaxation with due discernment as to those before whom a man of respectable character should give a loose to it. I suppose Agesilaus himself would have acted just in the same manner.

Birkbeck Hill is correct in assigning the original of the anecdote to Goldsmith's *Life of Nash*, which Boswell had read (cf. *Hyp.* 8). Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) was best known for his *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion* (1705). In the *Boswelliana* (219) there is another anecdote of his silence before a man whom he disdained—on that occasion, Voltaire.

Boswell consistently maintains the opinion of the dignity proper to clergymen which he expresses in this essay; cf. his remarks on Swift and Wild in *Hyp.* 62.

No. XXVI. Nov. 1779.

[ON THINKING]

Surge anime ex humili, teque ad meliora reserva.
—Thos. Seghet. in Delit. Poet. Scot.

"Rouse thee, my soul, from low despondency,
"And hope for better scenes reserv'd on high."[1]

THOUGHT and *Thinking* are words quite of familiar use; for they are perpetually recurring in the talk of every body, and yet how very imperfectly are these expressions understood. I question if one in a thousand who use them, could, when called upon, give any tolerable explanation of their meaning.

Where is the seat of thought? What is the nature of the thinking principle? How is the operation of thought in its variety of modes begun and carried on? are enquiries, I believe, too profound for man in this stage of his being. At least I can fairly argue from what facts have hitherto been presented to the annalists of speculation, that all attempts to give a solution of these difficulties have only afforded proofs how very inadequate the present faculties of human nature are to the task. It is humbling to think of the many wild and imperfect hypotheses which have been framed upon this subject by impatient and presumptuous incapacity, hypotheses not less ridiculously ignorant with respect to the wonderful science of mind, than the conjectures of the meanest rusticks as to the heavenly bodies are with respect to astronomy.

Providence has kindly allowed us much enjoyment of many things while their essence lyes yet concealed from us in impenetrable obscurity. The extensive usefulness and pleasure of Thinking can very well subsist, although our comprehension does not reach to a full knowledge of what Thought really is.

Thinking has been set down by an ingenious philosopher as the test of existence. "*Cogito, ergo sum*—I think, therefore I am."[2] Yet *Thought* has in the general acceptation of the vulgar, and

[1] From Μελετήματα ὑπόγεια, by Thomas Segethus, in *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum*, an anthology edited by A. Johnston, M.D., and published in Amsterdam, 1637.

[2] The phrase of Descartes (*Discours de la méthode*, 1637).

that too sanctified by the authority of great names, been understood as equivalent to *melancholy*.[3] When one is afflicted with a dreary, distempered mind, the common phrase is, "He is *thoughtful;*" never to think is one of the tumultuous prayers of Bacchanalian votaries.—

> "Let Bedlam be his portion
> "Who breaks his brains with thinking,"

begins one of our best drinking songs. Nay, Dryden says

> "Pleasures on levity's smooth surface flow
> "*Thought* brings the weight that sinks the soul to woe."

But Hypochondriack as I am, I would flatter myself, and in the sound frame in which I at present exist, I can say I am well persuaded that these are partial views only upon the dark side of thinking. Thinking may be either a pain or a pleasure, according as the mind is in a diseased or in a healthful state. It may as well be maintained that there is no enjoyment in bed, because there is none in the tossings of a feverish sick bed, as that there is no happiness in thinking, because Thought is sometimes distressing.

I most willingly admit that of all kinds of misery, the misery of Thought is the severest. The excellent *Andrew Baxter*, whose acute and pleasing Essay on the Immortality of the Soul has endeared his name to numbers,[4] has this remark in a part of his remains lately published. "He is a happy man who knows not by experience, that Thinking is many times a torture not to be conceived or endured." *Dr. Hugh Blair* in one of his very elegant Sermons, which is entitled "On the Disorders of the Passions,"[5]

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[3] See Introduction, III . 1.

[4] Andrew Baxter (1686–1750), scholar and tutor, was a devoted friend to John Wilkes, Boswell's scapegrace radical acquaintance (cf. *Hyp.* 49). His chief work was *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul* (1733), directed against Locke; an *Appendix* was added in 1750. A Dr. Duncan published *The Evidence of Reason in Proof of the Immortality of the Soul* from Baxter's MSS. in 1779. See also *Hyp.* 48, *Letters of B.*, 1. 69, for mention of Baxter.

[5] Dr. Hugh Blair (1718–1800), the friend of Hume, Adam Smith, Fergusson, Carlyle, and Kames, was the chief encourager of Macpherson, author of the Ossianic poems. Blair's position as regius professor of rhetoric and belles lettres at Edinburgh gave his *Critique on Ossian* (1763) weight which its arguments indubitably needed (see excerpt in Introduction, III . 1). The same feeble think-

thus admirably speaks: "Amidſt the ordinary calamities of the world, the mind can exert its powers, and ſuggeſt relief: and the mind is properly the man; the ſufferer, and his ſufferings, can be diſtinguiſhed. But those disorders of passion by seising directly on the mind, attack human nature in its ſtrong hold, and cut off its laſt resource. They penetrate to the very seat of sensation; and convert all the powers of Thought into inſtruments of torture." And in that sacred book where every thing is so much better said than any where else, we find "The spirit of a man may suſtain his infirmities. But a wounded spirit who can bear?"[6]

This anguish however is by no means the usual consequence of Thought. It has place only where there is remorse from a guilty conscience, or the direful malady of a diſtempered mind. And on the other hand, what comfort! what amusement! what luxury do we experience in thinking! what sources of happiness are there in the discovery of truths by our judgement—in the pleasures of imagination—in the gentle recollection of kind or amusing circumſtances—in the perpetual feaſt of a good conscience—in gay hopes of enjoyment in this life—and in myſterious yet ravishing contemplation of beatitude in the life that is to come! The exercise of every one of our mental powers is agreeable, and upon some occasions delightful. Incumbered and obſtructed as we are in these earthly cases, our minds are often able to exert such force and spirit as indicate our celeſtial tendency, and make us nobly disdain to acquiesce in sensual tranquillity, but elevate our wishes to those regions of intellectual felicity which we believe are before us.[7]

All the workings of our minds from the ſtudy of simple propositions to the contemplation of the sublimeſt objects, give us pleasure if our minds be in a healthful ſtate. If therefore heaven is pleased to grant us *Horace's* moſt rational wish, "*mens*

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ing and rolling elegance of style characterize his sermons, which were bought by Strahan on the advice of Johnson for the extraordinary sum of £1600; they served as models of sermon-writing for years.

[6] *Prov.*, 18. 14; quoted also in the *Life of J.*, 4. 71.

[7] On the superiority of the pleasures of mind over those of the flesh, cf. *Hyp.* 9 n. 10, *Hyp.* 36, 37, and notes. Boswell is here, as elsewhere, persuading himself of the excellence of a principle which he could not always practice. As a contrast to it, see his recurring wish to "retire to a desart" in search of "glorious insensibility" (*Hyp.* 20 n. 3).

sana in corpore sano—A sound mind in a sound body,"[8] instead of considering Thinking to be an evil, we shall esteem it as our greatest blessing, hold the *mind* to be indeed a *kingdom*,[9] and exult in the prospect of its extension and cultivation from age to age.

That Thought may in some degree be directed I cannot doubt, because I have the conviction of my own experience, and the assurance of others who have had much more experience, and that in a much abler manner. There *is* an "*art of Thinking*,"[10] however difficult it may be to attain it: and the chief aim of education

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[8] Not Horace, but Juvenal, *Sat.*, 10. 356. It is quoted correctly in *The Spectator*, 115. Boswell elsewhere makes the mistake of attributing a favorite phrase from this satire to Horace; see *Letters of B.*, 1. 183, and *Hyp.* 3 n. 9. The line here quoted is a favorite; cf. *Hyp.* 63, and *Boswelliana*, 327. In the last instance it is distorted to make a joke on Lord Monboddo—"*mens insana in corpore sano;* for his idea is to keep his mind wild and his body robust."

[9] Sir Edward Dyer's *My mind to me a kingdom is* (printed *ca.* 1585).

[10] An allusion to a work by Boswell's friend, Lord Kames—*Introduction to the Art of Thinking* (1761). For Boswell's habit of italicizing such half-punning references, see *Hyp.* 55 n. 6.

In his early years Boswell was occasionally sure that he was master of his mind, but in his later days he was much less certain of himself than this essay would have us believe. His great successes seem to have been restricted to his love affairs; see *Letters of B.*, 1. 134–35, and his remarks in the course of convincing his Zélide that he was not for her (*ibid.*, 1. 45):

> You know I am a man of form, a man who says to himself, Thus will I act, and acts accordingly. In short, a man subjected to discipline, who has his *orders* for his conduct during the day with as much exactness as any soldier in any service. And who gives these orders? I give them. Boswell when cool and sedate fixes rules for Boswell to live by in the common course of life, when perhaps Boswell might be dissipated and forget the distinctions between right and wrong, between propriety and impropriety.

In most of his expressions, however, Boswell states or implies a belief that a man's disposition can *not* be governed by his will or reason (*Hyp.* 48; *Letters of B.*, 1. 55, 77, 80, 95, 239; 2. 309, 344; *Life of J.*, 3. 382; *Hebr.*, 240, 434), and complains of the effects which weather or other circumstances have on the spirits (see *Hyp.* 38 n. 4). He is obliged to admit (*Life of J.*, 1. 398),

> The truth is, ... that we judge of the happiness and misery of life differently at different times, according to the state of our changeable frame. I always remember a remark made to me by a Turkish lady, educated in France, "Ma foi, Monsieur, notre bonheur dépend de la façon que notre sang circule." This I have learnt from a pretty hard course of experience, ... that until a steady conviction is obtained, that the present life is an imperfect state, ... there will be a continual recurrence of disappointment and uneasiness.

The persons of "much more experience, and that in a much abler manner," who assured Boswell that his mind could be directed, were no doubt his father, Lord Auchinleck, General Paoli, and Dr. Johnson. Boswell says of his father

should be to teach that art as much as possible; so that those who are instructed, may, by habitual reflection and animated exertions, *get the use of their minds*, as the exercises of the academy give them the use of their bodies. How this is performed I do not attempt to develope. I write upon the credit of experimental truth, upon which the keenest philosophical enquirer *must* act ninety-nine times in a hundred.[11] Nor can I be at all precise in defining what may or may not be done. That there may be too much bustle and exertion of mind to produce a substantial effect I am very sensible; and I have often admired the justness of that stroke of character in Pope:

"With too much Thinking ever to have Thought."[12]

(*Hebr.*, 434), "He always talked to me as if it were in a man's own power to attain [the *animus aequus*]"; General Paoli (*Account of Corsica*—3d ed., 350) waved aside all questioning on metaphysics with a sweeping "But let us leave these disputes to the idle. I hold always firm one great object. I never feel a moment of despondency." Most of Boswell's correspondence with Johnson concerns his difficulties in managing his mind, and almost every letter written by Johnson contains an "assurance" of the sort which Boswell mentions in this essay. It is possible that in writing these paragraphs he has in mind the conversation of March 19, 1776 (*Life of J.*, 2. 504):

> Talking of constitutional melancholy, he observed, "A man so afflicted, Sir, must divert distressing thoughts, and not combat with them." Boswell. "May not he think them down, Sir?" Johnson. "No, Sir. To attempt to *think them down* is madness. He should have a lamp constantly burning in his bed-chamber during the night, and if wakefully disturbed, take a book, and read, and compose himself to rest. To have the management of the mind is a great art, and it may be attained in a considerable degree by experience and habitual exercise." Boswell. "Should not he provide amusements for himself? Would it not, for instance, be right for him to take a course of chymistry?" Johnson. "Let him take a course of chymistry, or a course of rope-dancing, or a course of any thing to which he is inclined at the time. Let him contrive to have as many retreats for his mind as he can, as many things to which it can fly from itself . . . ."

Boswell had already taken a course in chemistry, "a study which Dr. Johnson recommends much," in 1775 (*Letters of B.*, 1. 235), and he pursued various *systems* of "habitual exercise" so zealously as to occasion bored reproofs from Adam Smith and Lord Eglintoune (*Letters of B.*, 1. 46; *Boswelliana*, 218). For other methods of directing the mind to a healthful state, see *Hyp.* 6, 11, 23, 29, 39, 40, 63, 64, and notes.

[11] Cf. *Hyp.* 6, 12, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22; *Letters of B.*, 1. 178; 2. 305, 375, 447; and *Life of J.*, 1. 526—"Human experience, which is constantly contradicting theory, is the great test of truth."

[12] Boswell quotes from memory, *Mor. Ess.*, 2. 98—

> With too much thinking to have common thought.

For the hurry of spirits or the exertion of mind which prevents clear thought,

I must also confess that I do not quite believe that any man possesses the perfect power of clearing his mind from what thoughts he chooses to expel; though I think it is Dr. *South* who gravely exhorts, "When an evil Thought cometh into the mind of a Christian, let him calmly set it aside."[13] Some Thoughts will, by particular causes or associations gain such a predominance in our minds, as not to be subdued by any immediate efforts, but must be allowed gradually to decay or be covered by the succession of other Thoughts; and I cannot with any clearness affirm or deny what share other spirits may be permitted to have in mingling what Thoughts they choose, with ours, and in keeping certain Thoughts permanent in our minds.[14] I am above being ashamed

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cf. *Hyp.* 10, 22, 23, 53, 65, 70; *Letters of B.*, 1. 88, 220, 223; 2. 290, 405. See also *Life of J.*, 4. 116, 128. Boswell describes his sensations in *Boswelliana*, 272:

> Our frame and temper of mind depends much on the state of our bodies. The human body is often called a machine, and a wonderful machine it is. The blood is like quicksilver, the veins like feathers, the nerves like springs. The soul sits in the machine. As one who in a chaise when driving hard cannot hear or give attention, I have been conscious of the corporeal machine running on with such rapidity that I felt to apply seriously to anything was in vain for me while that continued.

[13] Boswell had evidently obeyed Johnson's advice to "read South's *Sermons on Prayer*" (*Life of J.*, 2. 120). The exhortation which Boswell here repeats could have been well taken by the exhorter, since Robert South (1634–1716) was only kept from a bishopric by his quarrelsome temper, which came to such a pitch in controversy with William Sherlock that King William was obliged to interfere between them. His sermons were published singly at various times, and collected (six volumes) in 1692, reaching a second edition in his lifetime. His sermon style was familiar and heavily sarcastic; Johnson criticizes him as "one of the best, if you except his peculiarities, and his violence, and sometimes coarseness of language" (*Life of J.*, 3. 281). See the specimen of his style in *Hyp.* 44 n. 11.

[14] Boswell was fully persuaded of the interference of spirits; cf. *Hyp.* 48, 63, 66, 67. The "great minds" whose opinions he knew, may be Lucretius (*De Re. Nat.*, 4. 34) or Josephus (*Antiq. Jud.*, 17. 13), since he alludes to their works elsewhere in the essays; or Archbishop Laud, whose opinions on this subject he quotes in *Hyp.* 66; more likely they are Sir John Pringle (*Life of J.*, 3. 200 n. 2) and Dr. Johnson, who was "prone to superstition, but not to credulity" (*Hebr.*, 18, *Life of J.*, 1. 273, 469; 3. 261). Throughout the tour to the Hebrides, Boswell and Johnson were on the alert to collect evidence upon second-sight, the return of spirits, and so on (*Hebr.*, 182, 187, 258, 364, 407, 444; *Letters of J.*, 1. 231, 268, 281); many conversations in the *Life* turn on the same subject, but usually with Boswell defending his belief before a skeptical

of having the character of *superstitious* in this age; and therefore I write with freedom and firmness according to my own way of thinking, in which I coincide with as great minds as have ever passed athwart this globe. In the art of Thinking as in other arts, though *all* cannot be accomplished, *much* may be done, and that should be sufficient to excite our industry.

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audience. Malone's suggestion that Boswell actually delighted in superstitious notions (*Life of J.*, 4. 109 n.) is borne out by one of his *Letters* (1. 212)—

> My superstition . . . . you know is not small, & being not of the gloomy but the grand species, is an enjoyment, & I go further than Mr. Johnson, for the facts which I heard convinced me.

See also *ibid.*, 2. 360, 363; *Boswelliana*, 254.

In spite of their insistence that "experience is the test of truth," Boswell and Johnson both based their acceptance of the supernatural on authority or mere logic; cf. *Rasselas*, chap. 31:

> "That the dead are seen no more," said Imlac, "I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion . . . . could become universal only by its truth; those that never heard of one another would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible."

See also *Life of J.*, 4. 335:

> [Johnson] admitted the influence of evil spirits upon our minds, and said, "Nobody who believes the New Testament can deny it."
>
> I brought a volume of Dr. Hurd the Bishop of Worcester's *Sermons*, and read to the company some passages from one of them, upon this text, "*Resist the Devil, and he will fly from you.*" *James*, iv. 7. I was happy to produce so judicious and elegant a supporter of a doctrine, which, I know not why, should, in this world of imperfect knowledge, and, therefore, of wonder and mystery in a thousand instances, be contested by some with an unthinking assurance and flippancy.

In a long note Boswell quotes the sermon at some length. For typical eighteenth-century dependence upon the power of reason, see Johnson's conversation with Crosbie (*Hebr.*, 50):

> Mr. Crosbie said, he thought it the greatest blasphemy to suppose evil spirits counteracting the Deity, and raising storms, for instance, to destroy his creatures. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, if moral evil be consistent with the government of the Deity, why may not physical evil be also consistent with it? It is not more strange that there should be evil spirits, than evil men: evil unembodied spirits, than evil embodied spirits. And as to storms, we know there are such things; and it is no worse that evil spirits raise them, than that they rise." CROSBIE. "But it is not credible, that witches should have effected what they are said in stories to have done." JOHNSON. "Sir, I am not defending their credibility. I am only saying, that your arguments are not good, and will not overturn the belief of witchcraft. . . . . And then, Sir, you have all mankind, rude and civilized, agreeing in the belief of the agency of preternatural powers. You must take evidence: you must consider, that wise and great men have condemned witches to die." CROSBIE. "But an act of parliament put an end to witchcraft." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; witchcraft had ceased; and therefore an act of parliament was passed to prevent persecution for what was not witchcraft. Why it ceased, we cannot tell, as we cannot tell the reason for many other things."

See also *Life of J.*, 2. 12, 172, 204, 209.

No. XXVII. Dec. 1779.

[ON AUTHORSHIP & REVISION]

Diligentiam tuam in retractandis operibus valde probo. Est tamen aliquis modus: primum quod nimia cura deterit magis quam emendat: deinde quod nos a recentioribus revocat, simulque nec absolvit priora & inchoare posteriora non patitur.—PLIN. EPIST.[1]

"I extremely approve of your care in revising your works; remember, "however, that this exactness has its limits: too much polishing rather "weakens than strengthens a performance. Besides, this excessive delicacy, "while it calls one off from other pursuits, not only prevents any new "attempts, but does not even finish what it has begun."—MELMOTH.

THERE is such a propensity in the mind of man to vanity and self-importance, that people are ready to take every method in their power to gratify a fancied superiority over others.[2] One very usual mode of indulging this, is to magnify the difficulties of the science, art, or study, to which we have particularly applied ourselves; so that if our representations were to have full credit, the utmost assiduity during the longest life would not be sufficient to make us tolerable proficients. My readers will join with me in acknowledging that when in their youth they have heard of the prodigious research, and numerous qualifications necessary to make a divine, a lawyer, or a physician, it has appeared a most arduous and discouraging attempt to try to be either of them. Yet upon advancing into life, and coming close to real practice, the imaginary insurmountable obstacles have vanished, and although no doubt perfection is still at an aweful distance, a decent skill fit for all ordinary purposes is perceived to be general and comparatively easy.

Authors are, perhaps, the most distinguished amongst mankind

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[1] Considering the sentiment of this quotation, it is amusing to find that the translation of Pliny's *Letters* by William Melmoth (1710–1799) is criticized as "remarkably elegant . . . . though the translator has enfeebled the energy of the originals by the extreme care and polish he has bestowed upon the style of the English version" (Cunningham, *The English Nation*, 4. 370).

Melmoth was a lawyer and dilettante in scholarship; aside from his Pliny, brought out in 1747, he translated Cicero's *Letters* and essays on friendship and on old age.

[2] Cf. *Hyp.* 18, 24 and notes.

for that artifice which I have now pointed out. Take the account which many of them give of the difficulty of literary composition, and it will appear almoſt impossible to any one who has not tried it, to become a writer entitled to any degree of praise.

There is a certain ſtrange myſteriousness propagated as to *appearing in print*, as the phrase is; as if there were some charm in a printing-press, and a man's character were to be sealed by an irrevocable sentence as soon as any work of his hath passed through that engine. This superſtition has been so prevalent, that I am convinced it has had no small effect in preventing the world from being inſtructed or amused by the original effusions of many young and modeſt minds. For although anonymous publications be a veil sufficient for concealment, the timid apprehension of discovery deters many from throwing out their lucubrations to their fellow-creatures at large. Notwithſtanding the many complaints which superficial thinkers have made of the multiplicity of idle and useless books and pamphlets which have come abroad, it is clear to me that the more numerous publications are so much the better, because so many more chances are given for useful discoveries and pleasing varieties of entertainment.[3] I have heard it observed by one remarkably well acquainted with literary performances, that there never was any publication in which there was not something that could be turned to use; and that he would wish to have an immense publick library, in which every publication, good, bad, and indifferent, should be preserved for the benefit of extensive consultation.[4] I am not sure that I should

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[3] See Introduction, I . 2; II . 2; and *Hyp.* 52 n. 16.

[4] The tone of this remark is characteristically Johnsonian; so is that of the next to last paragraph, on second editions. These comments may be Boswell's recollections of a conversation on books, which he had not recorded in his journals; the present number of *The Hypochondriack* was written toward the end of 1779, one of the periods of inattention to his notes for which Boswell apologizes (*Life of J.*, 3. 428, 463).

All *copyrighted* publications were supposed to be preserved as the person "well acquainted with literary performances" desired, under the copyright act of 1709. It provided that the royal library (which became part of the British Museum Library in 1757), the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, and the libraries of Oxford, Cambridge, and four Scottish universities, should receive nine copies each of every registered publication (Boswell says carelessly, "of every new work published"—*Hebr.*, 44). The wish expressed in this essay may have resulted

approve of this very comprehensive scheme, in which however I own that there is a kind of sublimity when one thinks of the immense size of the repository, and of all the works of all the minds for ages being collected together. But surely it is desireable to have as many publications as may be. The manufacture is an object of utility; authors will not write long without a pecuniary reward, and consequently the reciprocation of labour and money is kept up, unless where there happens to be a rich author who publishes without any view of gain; and then the same reciprocation goes on, though he does not share in any returns of profit. If it should be objected that good performances will be lost in the undistinguished mass, I answer that we have journalists or reviewers in all parts of Europe, who are paid for riddling the mass, and separating for us what is valuable.

No doubt the dread of criticks is another terror superadded to the primary fear of publication. But as I really believe that in general the regular criticks give a just and fair decision, a man of proper spirit and candour should willingly acquiesce in their sentence, and either give over attempting that for which he is unqualified, or improve by the admonitions which he has received. If indeed he has a firm consciousness that his judges are in the wrong, he need not be uneasy, but may appeal from their tribunal to the world in general, and to posterity.[5] And still I would have it kept in view, that being in print is not so very different from

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from the negligence with which even the British Museum treated this privilege of collecting the copyrighted books; Sir Anthony Panizzi, who became custodian in 1837, was the first official to see that the national library reaped full benefit from the act of 1709.

[5] Cf. the much sturdier reason for assigning one's works to the judgment of later ages, in Johnson's *Rasselas*, chap. 10:

> [The poet] must . . . . content himself with the slow progress of his name, contemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity.

Johnson had no dread of criticism, but welcomed it as a method of attracting attention (*Hebr.*, 456):

> Dr. Johnson said, ... "It is advantageous to an authour, that his book should be attacked as well as praised. Fame is a shuttlecock. If it be struck only at one end of the room, it will soon fall to the ground. To keep it up, it must be struck at both ends."

See also *ibid.*, 311 ff., where he refused to exchange reviews with Goldsmith—"I said, No; set Reviewers at defiance"—and *Life of J.*, 2. 384; 3. 426, 456, 481; 4. 487.

expressing our thoughts in conversation, or in letters to our friends, that we should be so very much afraid of it. Unless it is to be supposed that publication virtually includes a confident challenge for fame or disgrace, which may be imputed by nice censoriousness, and I am afraid is often felt by vanity, in conversation and in letters of correspondence, I do not see why we should be more afraid to publish than to talk or write at all to others. What is published, to be sure is probably longer preserved, and is subjected to the censure of more people. But if it were once understood that a man may publish as easily as he talks, and seriously stake his reputation only upon such works as he deliberately sends forth as finished and permanent transcripts of his wisdom or ingenuity, we should have a much better play of mind.[6]

Correction is a capital difficulty which authors have always held out to the attention of their readers. The ancients talk a great deal of the metaphorical *file* in literary performances; and Horace recommends keeping a work for no less than nine years before one should venture to publish it.[7] But is there not in this a great deal of quackery, or at least unnecessary anxiety? I would instance Virgil, who, it is said, was of opinion that his Georgicks only were finished, in so much that he gave orders to have his other poems committed to the flames; yet how do we admire both his Pastorals

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[6] Cf. Boswell to Temple in 1763 (*Letters of B.*, 1. 26):

> Would it not be absurd if you and I should stand upon ceremony in our correspondence? I think our best way is just to write to each other whenever we feel an inclination to say something. When we are together we never think of parcelling out our sentences in reciprocal proportion. . . . . Why then should I think that written conversation should be managed so very differently? In reality I do not think so.

It is possible that Boswell derived this idea from Sterne; cf. *Tristram Shandy*, 2. 2:

> Writing, when properly managed (as you may be sure I think mine is) is but a different name for conversation.

On the distinction to be made between ephemeral and serious compositions, cf. *Letters of B.*, 1. 245:

> It pleases me much that you are making good progress in your *Essays*. . . . . I allways was sure they would do you honour as a man of reading and taste, ... [but] I must insist on your putting your name to them, and leaving out, for some future publication, any passages which you do not chuse at present to own.

Contrast to all of these remarks, Boswell's opinions on anonymity in *Hyp.* 14; *Life of J.*, 3. 51; *Letters of B.*, 1. 250.

[7] *Ars Poet.*, 388. See also Martial, *Epigr.*, 10. 2.

and his Æneid, which fortunately for us were preserved contrary to their author's inclination.[8]

What a treasure would it be if we could have Virgil's own copy of his works, and see the corrections which he made. Yet Warburton has obliged us with several variations in Pope's poetry; and while we are entertained by comparing them with the text, we have an opportunity of being at the same time convinced that correction is not always for the better. We are told that Pope had in the first manuscripts of all his poems a multiplicity of different readings. He tells us himself, that while yet a child

"He lisp'd in numbers; for the numbers came."[9]

It would seem that his genius afterwards did not gush forth in one stream of fluency, but sprung in many rills, of which he at leisure chose what he thought the most beautiful.[10] Yet I should be of opinion that what is struck in the mental mint at once is best. The poets "fine phrenzy," which Shakespeare describes, glances quickly.[11]

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[8] Suetonius, *Vita Vergili.*

[9] *Prol. to Sat.*, 128. The pronoun of the original line is in the first person.

[10] Cf. *Hyp.* 4 n. 4, and the use of this figure, much as Boswell employs it here, in *Letters of B.*, 1. 185–86:

I must, therefore, look upon you as a Fountain of Wisdom, from whence few rills are communicated to a distance, and which must be approached at it's source, to partake fully of it's virtues.

[11] The missing apostrophe in the sentence was overlooked by Boswell. "Fine frenzy" occurs in *M.N.D.*, 5. 1 . 12; see also *Hyp.* 55.

On the unhappy effect of correction in composition, cf. *Life of J.*, 4. 13, where Johnson accepts criticism on one of his translations:

Dyer . . . . pointed out an incongruity in one of the sentences. Johnson immediately assented to the observation, and said, "Sir, this is owing to an alteration of a part of the sentence, from the form in which I had first written it; and I believe, Sir, ... the making a partial change, without a due regard to the general structure of the sentence, to be a very frequent cause of errour in composition."

In spite of this opinion, and the opinion expressed by *The Hypochondriack*, Boswell preserved the variant readings of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* with the observation (*Life of J.*, 4. 45),

It is remarked by Johnson in considering the works of a poet, that "amendments are seldom made without some token of a merit;" but I do not find that this is applicable to prose. We shall see that though his amendments in this work are for the better, there is nothing of the *pannus assutus;* the texture is uniform: and indeed, what had been there at first is very seldom unfit to have remained.

Many would, I think, agree that the original phrasing was frequently fitter to

The best advice which I can offer to an author, is to take care that he has a competent knowledge of the subject on which he is to write, and some previous store of allusion. If he be thus prepared he may trust that his composition will be suitable. No doubt a certain attention in revising and correcting afterwards is right; and this Pliny allows, though he also very properly observes that too much polishing weakens a performance, and that an excessive delicacy at once prevents us from finishing our works, and from entering upon other attempts.

Alterations must be either in the language or in the matter itself. If in the first, Pliny's judgement should be remembered, and we should avoid a certain foppery which is produced by an exquisite choice and arrangement of words. If in the latter, we should rather write a new book. Many a book has been so altered and corrected in subsequent editions, though carrying the same title, that one might compare it to the ship of the Argonauts, which was so often repaired, that not one bit of the original wood remained. Indeed, I have always thought it not quite fair to the purchasers of the first edition of a book, to alter and correct, and amend and improve it so much in after editions, that the first is rendered by comparison of very little value. Yet it would be hard to restrain an author from making his own work as perfect as he can. The purchasers of a first edition have had what they considered to be value for their money. They may keep that value; and are not under any obligation to purchase a better edition. The case is not quite clear. I shall therefore leave it to the consideration of my readers, and only relate a witty remark of a learned friend who, when I complained that a book which I had bought when it came first out was altogether changed in a new edition; then, said he, if you buy this edition, you will get another book.

Some men have a vacillancy of mind which makes them quite indecisive in their composition, so that they shall alter and correct as long as they can; and at last be fixed only because the types

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remain than the correction, which is usually a consciously labored effect. Johnson wrote very rapidly (see *Life of J.*, Index under Johnson, *composition*), and "what was struck in the mental mint at once" was less generalized, less alliterative and balanced, than the alterations.

Boswell's assurance in advocating spontaneous writing came, no doubt, from his knowledge of Johnson's habits in composing. See Introduction, II. 2.

cannot be kept longer ſtanding. When this is only as to the language it is ridiculous enough. But when their indecision reſpects the very ſubſtance of their work, they are ſurely very unfit to be authors.[12] An eminent printer told me that a book of ſome authority upon law was printed at his preſs, and that when the proof ſheets were returned by the author, there was frequently an almoſt total alteration of many parts. This, ſaid he, was an effectual preventative to me from ever going to law; for, I conſidered if the authority itſelf was ſo uncertain, what muſt be the uncertainty of the interpretations of that authority!

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[12] Lord Lyttelton was one of these; see Johnson's *Life of Lyttelton:*

His laſt literary production was his *Hiſtory of Henry the Second*, elaborated by the researches and deliberations of twenty years, and published with ſuch anxiety as only vanity can dictate. The ſtory of this publication is remarkable. The whole work was printed twice over, a great part of it three times, and many ſheets four or five times. . . . . [His] ambitious accuracy is known to have coſt him a thouſand pounds. He began to print in 1755. Three volumes appeared in 1764, a ſecond edition of them in 1767, a third edition in 1768, and the conclusion in 1771.

No. XXVIII. Jan. 1780.

[ON CRITICISM]

Interea fidos adit haud securus amicos
Utque velint inimicum animum frontisque severæ
Dura supercilia induere & non parcere culpæ
Hos iterum atque interum rogat, admonitusque latentis
Grates lætus agit vitii & peccata fatetur
Sponte sua quamvis etiam damnetur iniquo
Iudicio & falsum queat ore refellere crimen.—VIDA.[1]

"He seeks his friends nor trusts himself alone,
"But asks their judgement and resigns his own,
"Begs them with urgent prayers to be sincere,
"Just, and exact, and rigidly severe.
"Due verdict to pronounce on ev'ry thought,
"Nor spare the slightest shadow of a fault.
"But bent against himself, and strictly nice
"He thanks each critick that detects a vice,
"Tho' charg'd with what his judgement can defend
"He joins the partial sentence of his friend."—PITT.

MY LAST number treated of revision and correction by an authour of his own works. It may perhaps be thought by some, that this self-criticism will be always exceedingly gentle, as Protestants are apt to represent the flagellation which Romish penitents administer to themselves. But this will depend much upon the different tempers of authours. One who is conceited and vain, will, like a hardened sinner be insensible of his imperfections and faults, while one who is modest and diffident will, like a penitent whose heart is broken with contrition, be perhaps too severe in judging of his performances.

Pope[2] maintains the opinion, that successful authours have been very rigid criticks upon their own works. For he tells us they

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[1] *De Arte Poetica*, 3. 466. Christopher Pitt (1699–1748) published his verse translation of the Bishop of Alba's famous work (first issued at Paris in 1534) in 1725; a second edition appeared in 1742. Pitt gave assistance to Pope in the translation of the *Odyssey*, and later translated Virgil's *Aeneid*.

[2] Not Pope, but Waller—*Upon the Earl of Roscommon's Translation of*

———"Lose half the praise they would have got,
"Were it but known what they discreetly blot."

But I am not sure that this is a juſt remark, though its quaintness has a decisive appearance. If it is meant that they lose half the praise they would have got, had they preserved what they have blotted, their blotting was not discreet. And if it is meant that their additional praise would have arisen from their discretion in blotting being known, I think it is rated too high, if it is to have half as much praise as excellent composition.

It has been again and again recommended to authours to diſtruſt their own opinion of their works, and to have recourse to the judgement of friends. This we know has suggeſted to so many authours, that one should think they would now be ashamed of it as worn out, the plausible pretext of publishing at the requeſt, or by the advice of friends.[3] I know not if too much diffidence be either reasonable or at all advantageous; and it seems to me ſtrange to suppose that a mind capable of producing performances worthy of praise should be so deſtitute of the faculty of judgement as to be altogether unconscious of their merit, and on the other hand that they should not be sensible of failing when their intellectual powers are occasionally enfeebled, or the light of their genius obscured.

Horace . . . . and of the Use of Poetry, 41–42:

> Poets lose half the praise they should have got,
> Could it be known what they discreetly blot.

[3] Even the virtuous Addison was capable of this subterfuge; Johnson, in his *Life of Addison*, cites Spence to the effect that

> When *Cato* was shewn to Pope, he advised the author to print it, without any theatrical exhibition; supposing that it would be read more favorably than heard. Addison declared himself of the same opinion; but urged the importunity of his friends for its appearance on the ſtage.

In the comic story of Sir Alexander Dick's ambitions to print, Boswell shows that he had difficulty in avoiding the knight's hints on this head; cf. *Letters of B.*, 2. 286:

> He said for some time that he intended [his British Georgick] only for his son and a few freinds [*sic*]. But I have perceived the wish of publication gradually springing from the root, which has, I take it, been all along in his mind. He even desired I would shew it to Strahan; which was a ſtrong indication of what he flattered himself would be *encouraged* by his friends. I evaded his inclination, ... telling him that to shew it to Strahan . . . . would be like shewing family furniture to an auctioneer.

Other critics did not manage so well (see *Hyp.* 38 n. 17).

Vida represents as an example in his didactick[3a] poem, an authour filled with extreme distrust of himself, and the most abject submission to the opinion of his friends, in so much as even acquiescing in what his judgement tells him and can demonstrate to be wrong in their sentence upon his works.

That this is an example which authours should imitate I cannot agree. For he who has not a decent confidence in himself must be so weak that nobody will set any value upon him, or upon his works. That a fondness for our own compositions may prevent us in many instances from perceiving their faults I allow; and therefore the opinion of impartial friends may be of use. But unless I am convinced that my friends are in the right I will not comply with their opinion.[4]

Merely saying that a composition, or any part of a composition does not please, without explaining why, is saying nothing that should influence an authour. It is only another instance of what has ever been and ever will be, that there are different tastes; so that if an authour himself, after having his critical attention awakened, is not sensible that what is objected to should not please, he would be much in the wrong to make an alteration.

A story is told which being probable is very likely to be true, that an authour put a play which he had written into the hands of a number of his critical friends separately, begging to have their candid remarks upon it; and that when their remarks came to be collected and compared, he found that all of them had objections to parts of the performance, but that each had happened to object

[3a] Originally printed *didactich*, and left thus by Boswell.

[4] Compare Boswell's attitude toward all pointless objections in preparing the *Life of J.*, expressed in the Preface, and in *Letters of B.*, 2. 394, 438. The famous instance is his rejection of Hannah More's sentimental pleas (H. More's *Memoirs*, 1. 403):

> I besought his tenderness for our virtuous and most revered departed friend, and begged that he would mitigate some of his asperities. He said roughly: "He would not cut off his claws, nor make a tiger a cat, to please anybody."

That he was neither stiff nor untractable may be seen by his requests for advice from Malone, and his acceptance of criticism from Windham and others (*Letters of B.*, 2. 416–17, 422, 424–25, 427, 428, 454).

See also his response to Sir Alexander Dick's criticisms of *The Hypochondriack* (*Letters of B.*, 2. 289):

> I am obliged to you for your hints as to my *Hypochondriack*. I wish you had given me more.

to a different scene. If therefore he had been to follow implicity the judgement of his friends in ſtriking out what was objectionable, he would not have had the veſtige of a play left. But would have resembled the man in the fable who had two wives, a young one and an old one, each of whom wishing to have his hair of her own colour, one pulled out the grey hairs and one the black, till the poor submiſſive husband was left quite bald.[5]

There is, I am afraid, in general, as little tenderneſs of conſcience in Criticiſm as in any thing which men are ever engaged. If injuries, as they certainly are, be great in proportion to the pain which they occaſion, Criticiſm often injures our neighbour more than hurting him in his body or eſtate. Yet with what inattention and levity, with what wantonneſs of abuſe do we find people decide upon the writings of others. I do not recollect that lawyers have mentioned this as a ſpecies of injury upon which an action would lie. To be ſure it would be difficult to empannael a jury to try the iſſue of a ſuit upon a charge of being unjuſtly called a blockhead, or a dunce; and therefore I believe the merits of ſuch queſtions muſt be left as heretofore to the grand aſſize of the publick.

Some of thoſe whom an authour calls his friends, take a haughty malignant pleaſure in treating his performances upon which they are conſulted, with capricious ſeverity. But it is no leſs cruel to deceive an authour by falſe commendation, till he publiſhes works by which he may ſuffer both in his fame and fortune. There is a delicate evaſion, which every authour of any diſcernment will underſtand, by which his friends may ſhow him that they totally diſapprove of his performance, without ſhocking him by ſaying ſo directly.[6] If, notwithſtanding this, he ſends it

[5] Phaedrus, *Fab.*, 2. 2. Cited alſo by *The Spectator*, 34.

[6] Johnſon did not like to be aſked for criticiſm (*Life of J.*, 2. 224; 3. 364), but when he was obliged to peruſe a work he did not like, he was a maſter of "delicate evaſion"; ſee *ibid.*, 3. 425; 4. 285–86; and *Hebr.*, 119—

> Lady Errol had given each of us a copy of an ode by Beattie, on the birth of her ſon. . . . . Mr. Boyd aſked Dr. Johnſon how he liked it. Dr. Johnſon, who did not admire it, got off very well, by taking it out, and reading the ſecond and third ſtanzas of it with much melody. This, without his ſaying a word, pleaſed Mr. Boyd.

Boſwell did not flinch in giving his candid opinion of works ſubmitted for his approval (*Letters of B.*, 1 . 188 ff., 2. 288), except in the caſe of Sir Alexander Dick's *Georgick*, mentioned above.

forth into the world, they are not to blame, and he must take the consequences. But there is an unconscientious exercise of Criticism which is most deeply culpable. An authour shows his manuscript to persons in whose skill and taste the purchasers of copy-right have confidence; and those persons to oblige the authour furnish him with flattering opinions of his work, knowing that he is to offer it to sale. Upon his showing these opinions a handsome price is given, and the booksellers are considerable losers. Such critical judges should consider that their commending a literary production which does not deserve it, is like an assay master certifying that to be gold which is only base metal.[7]

It is no doubt one of the most difficult tasks in the world to convey to an authour a candid disapprobation of his works, or even to correct them in any degree without offending him. Whatever he may affect, and though he should even express himself in the words of the motto to this paper, there will in most cases be found such a secret regard in an authour's breast for any thing he has written, that he will be uneasy if any one else does not view it in the same light. His parental affection will make him tender even of the slightest expressions and he will not easily forgive the salutary touches of Criticism. Thomson, it is said, used to writhe in pain when players were cutting his long scenes of tragedy. For though "he loathed much to write,"[8] he was fond of what he once had written. Goldsmith simply enough congratulated himself on having at last an opportunity to make himself of some consequence by doing a favour to a certain lord; for, said he, his lordship has given me his poems to correct, not considering that any correction would probably make his lordship his enemy for ever. Such correction, we are told, lost Voltaire the friendship of an illustrious

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[7] Cf. *Boswelliana*, 273:

A man of fame and acknowledged judgment as an author giving his opinion to a bookseller in favour of a literary work, the copy of which is offered for sale, when he does not sincerely think as he says, is a piece of real dishonesty, quite different from those commendations which a good-natured though not strictly honest flattery bestows. It is like a goldsmith, to whom suspicious metal is referred, certifying that it is gold when he knows it to be brass or a bad mixture.

[8] From the jesting stanza on Thomson himself, written by Lord Lyttelton for Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* (1. 68). Boswell quotes it again in a letter to Johnson (*Letters of B.*, 2. 279).

monarch who is not quite *sans souci* as to poetical fame;[9] and all who are much acquainted with writers, who, be their compositions prose or verse, are for the moſt part an irritable race, will recollect many such inſtances.

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[9] Boswell enjoyed this anecdote at the expense of Frederick the Great; he has two other renderings of it. See his note to *Hebr.*, 117:

> A certain king entered the liſts of genius with Voltaire. The consequence was that, though the king had great and brilliant talents, Voltaire had such a superiority that his majeſty could not bear it; and the poet was dismissed, or escaped, from that court. . . . .

and *Boswelliana*, 227:

> When Voltaire was at Berlin he used to be rude to the King of Prussia. The King came into his room one day when he had before him on a table a great parcel of his Majeſty's verses, which he no doubt put in order very freely. The King called to him, "*Que faites-vous, Voltaire?*" He replied, "*Sire, j'arrange votre linge sale.*"

See *Hyp.* 55 n. 6 for Boswell's habit of italicizing such allusions as this, in which he characterizes Frederick by the name of his famous palace.

No. XXIX. Feb. 1780.

[ON PITY]

Qui multum in suorum misericordia ponunt ignorant quàm celerrimè lachrymæ inarescant. Nemo fideliter diligit quem faſtidit. Nam et calamitas querula eſt, et superba felicitas. Ita suam quisque fortunam in consilio habet cum de aliena deliberat; et nisi mutuo essemus miseri olim alius alii potuissemus esse faſtidio.—QUINTUS CURTIUS.[1]

"For they who rely much on the compassion of their friends are ig-
"norant that tears are soon dried up. Nobody can love sincerely those they
"loath. For, as calamity is full of complaints, prosperity is disdainful.
"Every one considers his own circumſtances when he deliberates concern-
"ing those of others. And were we not equally miserable, we had long
"ago loathed each other."—DIGBY.

I ONCE happened to overhear a conversation between two grenadiers of the 56th regiment of foot, one of whom expressed his aversion to the fatigues, severities, and dangers of a campaign, while the other talked with heroick ardour of encountering them, concluding his speech in these words, "Let me be the man who is envied, not he who is pitied." I regret that I did not take down the name of this gallant soldier who uttered a truely noble sentiment with a native dignity of manner. If he has not obtained promotion, I am sure he deserved it.

I have since that time frequently thought of the sentiment which pleased me highly; and I hope I shall be able from thinking of it at present to ſuggeſt to my readers some useful reflexions.

To be the object of pity is a situation very humiliating. For although Pity is said to be siſter to love, and a certain degree of tender affection is always mixed with it, there is no doubt at the same time such an inferiority in being pitied as is not consiſtent with dignity of character. *Poor man—I am sorry for him—I pity him*—are lessening expressions, and *pitiful* is as much a contemptuous[2] as it is a lamentable epithet.

[1] *De Rebus Gestis Alexandri Magni*, 5. 5. 11. The translator quoted by Boswell is John Digby, who, aside from this version of Quintus Curtius Rufus (1714), translated the works of Lucian (1711) and the *Morals* of Epictetus (1712). His work was done in collaboration, according to the entries in the *B.M. Cat.*; he is not mentioned in the *D.N.B.*

[2] Originally printed *contemptous*, and left uncorrected by Boswell. This

All men therefore of high spirit endeavour to conceal the appearances of grief or distress. Not that they would wish to be thought insensible, or not to feel very keenly. But because they would not be objects of Pity, which implies weakness, but objects of Admiration as suffering with firmness.

Is it not then out of character in the brave Moor, the veteran general, *Othello*, to submit to be an object of Pity? In his justification of himself before the Senate of Venice for having gained the affections of his fair lady *Desdemona*, he tells how he recounted to her the story of his life with all its disastrous chances, and adds,

> "She lov'd me for the dangers I had past,
> "And I lov'd her that she did pity them."

But we must observe that he did not present himself to the Senate as an object of Pity. It was only to his mistress; and as I have remarked when treating of love in these papers, a man is not debased by the most submissive condescension when that is his motive. I did indeed at first suppose that *Shakespeare* with all his wonderful knowledge of human nature had in this instance been wrong. But I believe it will be found upon every trial as I have found here, that the more his strokes of character are considered they will appear the juster.

They who have enjoyed uninterrupted happiness are little disposed to pity others who are distressed. Very few indeed have had such a continued sun-shine of existence. But the reciprocation between having felt misery ourselves and feeling for that of others, will hold proportionally downwards till we come to those who are so wretched that their temper is broken and peevish.

It may be argued that Pity is natural to human nature; and this opinion I know is cherished by many fine theorists, the heat of whose imagination puts a gloss upon the coarseness of life. If it should be said that children are prone to pity, let it be remembered that we are all in some distress from our first enterance upon this state of being, so that sounds and signs of woe must touch our hearts with sympathetick feelings; but I am rather of opinion that children are naturally without Pity; and the man of nature, the

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essay is strong evidence of Boswell's intention to criticize his own greatest failings in *The Hypochondriack*; see n. 7 below, and Introduction, I . 2.

savage is undoubtedly void of it.[3] As we advance in life we must be "*taught* to feel another's woe,"[4] and precepts will not do without the more effectual discipline of distress.

That this is most certainly true none of us will doubt, who keep in mind with grateful reverence the mysterious condescension of the sacred author of our religion, who was himself tempted like as we are that he might have a feeling for our infirmities.

Amongst men, who as dependent beings, eager for happiness in a world where happiness is rarely to be found, must ever be influenced by views of self-interest immediate or more remote, it may be affirmed that Pity would not exist were it not from the consideration that they may stand in need of it in their turn. For what thinking man is not convinced that he is liable to variety of evil; and that the kind commiseration of others if delicately shown will soothe and alleviate his wretchedness.

At the same time we should never forget that a very nice delicacy indeed is requisite in showing pity. If a man cannot attune[5] his feelings, or at least his appearance and behaviour, to the state of mind in which he sees an unhappy friend, he had better keep at a distance from him. For to oppose joy or even serenity to sadness and vexation, has the effect of an insult though unintentional. In pitying an unhappy friend we must make him feel that we do not despise him but that we ourselves would be equally afflicted were we in his situation. The cause of his woe must be reflected from us to him, if not with equal magnitude to the picture in his imagination, yet with no striking difference, and by tacitly confessing a dread of what he suffers we must guard

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[3] One of the fine theorists was without doubt Boswell's friend George Dempster, who *learned sophistry from Hume and Rousseau* (*Letters of B.*, 1. 27), and who was said by Johnson to be a person "totally unfixed in his principles, and [wanting] to puzzle other people" (*Life of J.*, 1. 513). Boswell here presents Johnson's answer to some sentimental remark made on an evening when Dempster was dining with the friends (*Life of J.*, 1. 506):

> On Wednesday, July 20, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Dempster, and my uncle Dr. Boswell . . . . supped with me at these chambers. JOHNSON. "Pity is not natural to man. Children are always cruel. Savages are always cruel. Pity is acquired and improved by the cultivation of reason. We may have uneasy sensations from seeing a creature in distress, without pity; for we have not pity unless we wish to relieve them. . . . ."

[4] An adaptation of Pope's *Universal Prayer*, 37. See also *Hyp.* 24.

[5] In the original, *allure;* corrected by a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 30.

against seeming to have a superiority over him. Talk as we will of the dignity of distress, it is but an artificial dignity; and a sound, clear-headed, prosperous man cannot help feeling himself to be above the most meritorious unfortunate sufferer.[6] Hudibras's ludicrous apology for cowardice

> For those that fly may fight again,
> Which he can never do that's slain,

is so very contrary to the universal principles of respect due to bravery, and of contempt to pusillanimity, that a man must be a very dull and cold philosopher indeed who can seriously adopt it as good sense, though perhaps it is so in reality. But let us suppose two officers in the army, one of whom by the most distinguished bravery and masterly conduct has gained a complete victory of great consequence to his country, but has lost both his arms, or been otherwise maimed in a wretched manner; and the other without any disgrace, but by accidental arrangements has never had any opportunity of acquiring glory, or doing any service whatever, but has perfect health, and the possession of all his limbs in full vigour and grace, would not the latter be looked upon as having the advantage of the former?

But not only does Pity subject him who is the object of it to inferiority of estimation, but it also makes him more or less an object of disgust. We are affected with disgust by whatever gives us pain, and some philosophers have ascribed our relieving the distresses of others solely to our wish to get free of the uneasiness which their distresses make ourselves feel by presenting disagreeable images. Unless, therefore, our affection for the object of our Pity be such as to counterbalance the disgust, we shall not be able to prevent ourselves from looking upon that person with aversion.

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[6] Cf. *Life of J.*, 2. 537, 539:

Johnson. ". . . . People in distress never think that you feel enough." Boswell. "I own, Sir, I have not so much feeling for the distress of others, as some people have, or pretend to have: but I know this, that I would do all in my power to relieve them." Johnson. "Sir, it is an affectation to pretend to feel the distress of others, as much as they do themselves. It is equally so, as if one should pretend to feel as much pain while a friend's leg is cutting off, as he does. No, Sir, you have expressed the rational and just nature of sympathy. . . . ."

Johnson. ". . . . Now, Sir, you are to consider, that distance of place, as well as distance of time, operates upon the human feelings. I would not have you be gay in the presence of the distressed, because it would shock them; but you may be gay at a distance. . . . ."

See also *ibid.*, 1. 411; 2. 109; 4. 254–55.

These considerations which experience proves to be just, should make us very cautious of complaining to people indiscriminately. An Hypochondriack is very apt to do this. A sickly man goes about to every one who pretends to skill in physick, or who he thinks has been ill like himself, hoping to obtain a cure or a palliative. So a Hypochondriack whose mind is sickly, and who suspects that others are not well, his distemper having in common with the jaundice an imaginary transference or communication of itself, is perpetually trying to obtain hints for relief, and while his spirits are sunk in despondency, lays open all his weakness.[7] Instead of giving my reader a long admonition which he may forget, I would have him keep in his memory as I do, an observation by Dr. Johnson in his preface to Cowley. "He published his pretensions and his discontent in an Ode called "The Complaint," in which he stiles himself the *melancholy* Cowley. This met with the usual fortune of complaints, and seems to have excited more Contempt than Pity."

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[7] Further self-criticism; this passage is clearly a paraphrase of Johnson's advice to Boswell, in any number of letters written to him, and in many conversations. Typical examples of Johnson's censure are the letters in the *Life of J.*, 3. 153, 419, and 4. 82:

That distrust which intrudes so often on your mind is a mode of melancholy, which, if it be the business of a wise man to be happy, it is foolish to indulge; and if it be a duty to preserve our faculties entire for their proper use, it is criminal. (September 1777.)

When any fit of anxiety, or gloominess, or perversion of mind, lays hold upon you, make it a rule not to publish it by complaints, but exert your whole care to hide it; by endeavouring to hide it, you will drive it away. Be always busy. (November 1778.)

I hoped you had got rid of all this hypocrisy of misery. What have you to do with Liberty and Necessity? Or what more than to hold your tongue about it? (March 1781.)

See also *Hyp.* 23 n. 15.

For cures which Johnson suggested, see *Hyp.* 6, 26, 39, 40, 63, and notes.

The sensible resolve to disguise gloom or sensitiveness, so gravely set forth in this essay, was forgotten when Boswell prepared his correspondence with Johnson for the *Life;* in presenting a letter of 1776 from Johnson he omits much of the original phrasing, supplying (in brackets) a résumé in his own words which shows distinct grievance at the lack of sympathy from his fellow-hypochondriac (*Life of J.*, 3. 99):

These black fits, of which you complain, perhaps hurt your memory as well as your imagination. . . . . Your last letter, after a very long delay, brought bad news. [Here a series of reflections upon melancholy, and—what I could not help thinking strangely unreasonable in him who had suffered so much from it himself—a good deal of severity and reproof, as if it were owing to my own fault, or that I was, perhaps, affecting it from a desire of distinction.]

No. XXX. March 1780.

[ON DRINKING]

Ebrietas eſt blandus dæmon, dulce venenum, suave peccatum; quod qui habet seipsum non habet; quod qui facit, peccatum non facit, sed ipse eſt peccatum.—St. Augustine.[1]

"Drunkenness is a flattering devil, a sweet poison, a pleasant sin, which "whosoever hath, hath not himself; which whosoever doth commit, doth "not commit sin, but he himself is wholly sin."—Sir Walter Raleigh.

I PROMISED many months ago to give my readers a paper upon Drinking; and although I have not vanity enough to believe that there is much attentive expectation, I am now to fulfil my engagement.

Here again I am anxious to have it underſtood, that *The Hypochondriack* does not pretend to the wisdom and influence of a teacher. Did I consider myself as in that character, I should hardly venture to put any opinion or even any sentiment into these papers which has not been sanctified by great authority. But as I am only the companion of my readers, I have no scruple to write freely, as they will judge for themselves.

I do fairly acknowledge that I love Drinking; that I have a conſtitutional inclination to indulge in fermented liquors, and that if it were not for the reſtraints of reason and religion I am afraid I should be as conſtant a votary of Bacchus as any man. To be sensible of this is a continual cause of fear, the uneasiness of which greatly counterbalances both the pleasure of occasional gratification and the pride of frequent successful resiſtance, and therefore it is certainly a misfortune to have such a conſtitution.[2] My

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[1] In Boswell's source, chap. ix of *Sir Walter Raleigh's Instructions to His Sonne and to Posterity* (1664), the Latin concludes thus: "*quam*, qui habet . . . . *quam*, qui facit, ... sed *ipsi eſt* peccatum." I cannot trace the passage in the works of Augustine.

[2] Boswell's "conſtitutional inclination" is suggested also in his *Letters*, 1. 12, 180; 2. 461; and in *Boswelliana*, 290, 298.

The restraints which Boswell mentions were not efficacious, but he invented a new one after each failure (*Letters of B.*, 1. 169), and kept up the practice all his life. He depended chiefly upon promises or vows made to his various friends; his vow to Temple "under the solemn yew" kept him sober a short while (*Letters*

thoughts upon Drinking cannot be supposed to be quite uniform and fixed. Yet I flatter myself that as I have revolved the subject very often in my mind, and that too in very different states,[3] I may bring together some particulars which will furnish a periodical essay sufficiently well.

The motto of this paper being a sentence of a saint, may perhaps be thought to portend a very rigid discourse. But they who think so will find themselves mistaken. And indeed I am rather apprehensive of erring upon the other side. As some of my readers may be curious to know where I have found so illustrious a translator of *St. Augustine* as *Sir Walter Raleigh,* I shall tell them, that the sentence and its translation is in that great man's *Instructions to his Son,* in the chapter entitled, "What inconveniencies happen to such as delight in wine;" which begins thus: "Take especial care that thou delight not in wine; for there never was any man that came to honour or preferment that loved it." A proposition which many eminent characters both in ancient and modern times have proved not to be true. That lovers of wine have rarely been good members of society in the decent mediocrity of ordinary parts, is a juster remark. For men of superior talents have been able to rise high, notwithstanding the impediment of a vice which would have depressed feebler spirits.[4]

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of B., 1. 229, 236); later he made a promise to General Paoli to refrain from liquors for a year (*ibid.*, 251); in 1778 he became a "water-drinker" on Johnson's recommendation (*Life of J.*, 3. 192, 374). In 1790–91 he was making promises of abstention to Courtenay and Malone (*Letters of B.*, 2. 405, 427).

[3] Cf. *Hebr.*, 296–97:

I felt myself more comfortable in the afternoon. I then thought that my last night's riot was no more than such a social excess as many happen without much moral blame; and recollected that some physicians maintained, that a fever produced by it was, upon the whole, good for health: so different are our reflections on the same subject, at different periods; and such the excuses with which we palliate what we know to be wrong.

The state in which Boswell wrote this essay was, I think, one to be both pitied and censured; the arguments are feeble in themselves, inconsistent, and sometimes incoherent, and the tone fluctuates between geniality and heavy solemnity.

[4] Cf. *Hebr.*, 178:

After supper, Dr. Johnson told us, that Isaac Hawkins Browne drank freely for thirty years, and that he wrote his poem, *De Animi Immortalitate*, in some of the last of these years. I listened to this with the eagerness of one who, conscious of being himself fond of

It cannot be denied that by far the greateſt part of mankind have in all ages been fond of drinking. Children and savages take fermented liquors with an eagerness which shows that the fondness is natural. And travellers have discovered that in countries where the art of making fermented liquors has not yet been discovered, there are other means of intoxication.[5] Is not this a ſtriking proof of the general unhappiness of the human race?

> O, mortal man! who liveſt here in toil,
> Do not complain of this thy hard eſtate;
> That like an emmet thou muſt ever moil
> Is a sad sentence of an ancient date.[6]

Does it not confirm the opinion of those who have thought and

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wine, is glad to hear that a man of so much genius and good thinking as Browne had the same propensity.

Johnson did not believe an entire principle to be proved by a few examples, however; cf. *Life of J.*, 3. 48:

JOHNSON. ". . . . When they have drunk wine, every man feels himself happy, ... but he is not improved; he is only not sensible of his defects. . . . . I indeed allow that there have been a very few men of talents who were improved by drinking; but I maintain that I am right as to the effects of drinking in general: and let it be considered, that there is no position, however false in its universality, which is not true of some particular man."

Boswell comes around to the same point of view in *Hyp.* 35—"Vices of great men ſtain even them, and cannot be suſtained by those of mediocre abilities."

The sentence structure of the essay paragraph is typically Boswellian; cf. *Hyp.* 59 n. 7.

[5] This may be a reference to Robertson's *History of America*, with its many citations from various travellers; Boswell had read the book (cf. *Hyp.* 32): I find in Bk. 4, § 100,

The Americans are extremely addicted to drunkenness. It seems to have been one of the firſt exertions of human ingenuity to discover some composition of intoxicating quality; and there is hardly any nation so rude, or so deſtitute of invention, as not to have succeeded in this fatal research. The moſt barbarous of the American tribes have been so unfortunate as to attain to this art; and even those which are so deficient in knowledge, as to be unacquainted with the method of giving an inebriating ſtrength to liquors by fermentation, can accomplish the same end by other means. The people of the islands of North America, and of California, used, for this purpose, the smoke of tobacco, drawn up with a certain inſtrument into the noſtrils, the fumes of which ascending to the brain, they felt all the transports and frenzy of intoxication.

Otherwise, the passage may be an allusion to the tales of the Earl of Galloway, who is quoted in *Hyp.* 32 in a passage concerning drinking among the Turks, "who make so much use of opium." See also *Life of J.*, 4. 197.

[6] The opening lines of Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, mismetred for default of sobriety, no doubt; originally Boswell omitted the article in the last line

asserted that in this state of being man is restless and unhappy, and always willing to forget himself. Does it not proclaim the truth of what the gloomy but noble minded philosopher *Maupertuis* observes, that mankind are all agreed in this: "*de chercher des remêdes au mal de vivre*—to endeavour to find remedies for the pain of existence."[7]

An Hypochondriack is under peculiar temptations to participate freely of wine. For the impatience of his temper under his sufferings which are sometimes almost intolerable, urges him to fly to what will give him immediate relief. It has often occurred to me, that one must be obstinate to an extraordinary degree, who feeling himself in torment can resist taking what he is certain will procure him ease, or at least insensibility. To be sure we know that an excess in wine which alone can move a thick melancholy, will probably make us worse when its violent operation has ceased, so that it is in general better to bear the mental malady with firmness. Yet I am not sure but when the black distress has been of long continuance, it may be allowable to try by way of a desperate remedy, as poisons are sometimes given in medicine, what a joyous shock will produce. To have the mind fairly disengaged from its baneful foe, even for a little while, is of essential consequence. For it may then exert its latent vigour, and though hurt by its

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quoted. Also, the first line should run *livest here by toil*. At the end of *Hyp.* 31 he printed a note directing the insertion of *an*, but failed to correct the faulty preposition.

[7] Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis (1698–1759), naturalist and mathematician, was involved by his moody disposition in constant quarrels; his most important enemy was Voltaire. Boswell says of him in a note on Johnson's surprising range of reading (*Life of J.*, 2. 62 n. 2):

> Who could have imagined that the High Church of Englandman would be so prompt in quoting *Maupertuis*, who, I am sorry to think, stands in the list of those unfortunate mistaken men, who call themselves *esprits forts*. I have, however, a high respect for that Philosopher whom the great Frederick of Prussia loved and honoured, and addressed pathetically in one of his Poems,—
>
> "Maupertuis, cher Maupertuis,
> Que notre vie est peu de chose!"
>
> There was in Maupertuis a vigour and yet a tenderness of sentiment, united with strong intellectual powers, and uncommon ardour of soul. Would he had been a Christian! I cannot help earnestly venturing to hope that he is one now.

Boswell quotes his *Essai de Philosophie Morale*, chap. 2:

> Dans l'Europe, l'Asie, l'Afrique & l'Amérique, tous les hommes, d'ailleurs si divers, ont cherché des remèdes au mal de vivre.

rough deliverer, be able to get the better of what pressed it down before in abject submission.[8]

But we are not to consider the world as one immense hospital: and whenever we see a company with wine circulating amongst them, to think that they are patients swallowing a necessary potion. Drinking is in reality an occupation which employs a considerable portion of the time of many people; and to conduct it in the most rational and agreeable manner is one of the great arts of living.[9]

It is in vain for those who drink liberally to say that it is only for the sake of good company. Because it is very certain that if the wine were removed the company would soon break up, and it is plain that where wine is largely drunk there is less true social intercourse than in almost any other situation. Every one is intent upon the main object. His faculties are absorbed in the growing ebriety, the progress of which becomes more rapid every round, and all are for the moment persuaded of the force of that riotous

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[8] Cf. Boswell's explanation of his youthful excesses (*Letters of B.*, 1. 12):

I have at bottom a melancholy cast; which dissipation relieves by making me thoughtless, and therefore, an easier, though a more contemptible, animal.

He offered the same excuse to Johnson (*Life of J.*, 2. 222), and was rudely suppressed. On another occasion Johnson asserted that "Melancholy should be diverted by every means but drinking" (*ibid.*, 3. 6), his objection being what Boswell admits at the end of this essay—that the sufferer is worse for the cure; see *ibid.*, 1. 517:

He said melancholy people were apt to fly to intemperance for relief, but that it sunk them much deeper in misery. He observed, that labouring men who work hard, and live sparingly, are seldom or never troubled with low spirits.

See also *Works of J.* (ed. 1787), 6. 271:

. . . . students . . . . sometimes fly for relief to wine instead of exercise, and purchase temporary ease by the hazard of the most dreadful consequences.

In many conversations, however, Johnson allowed that wine was useful in reducing misery: he observed that man is never happy in *the present* except when drunk (*Life of J.*, 2. 402); that he himself drank freely at one time in order to get rid of low spirits (*ibid.*, 3. 49, 372); that drinking causes forgetfulness of being one of mankind (*ibid.*, 2. 498 n. 7); that not to drink wine was "a great reduction from life" (*ibid.*, 3. 193, 278). On Johnson's abstinence, and the reasons for it, see *Hyp.* 33 n. 7.

[9] Cf. *Life of J.*, 3. 442:

Talking of the effects of drinking, [Johnson] said, "Drinking may be practised with great prudence; a man who exposes himself when he is intoxicated, has not the art of getting drunk; a sober man who happens occasionally to get drunk, readily enough goes into a new

maxim which I believe has been seriously uttered, that "Conversation spoils drinking."

Were we so framed that it were possible by perpetual supplies of wine to keep ourselves for ever gay and happy, there could be no doubt that Drinking would be the *summum bonum*, the *chief good*, to find out which philosophers have been so variously busied. We should then indeed produce in ourselves by the juice of the grape the effects which the seducing serpent pretended our first parents would feel by eating of the forbidden tree in the midst of the garden. We should "be as gods knowing good and evil;" and such a wild imagination of felicity must have filled the mind of Homer, when he thought of representing the gods of the Greeks as drinking in heaven, as he does in so high a strain of poetry, that one forgets the absurdity of the mythology.[10] But we know from humiliating[11] experience that men cannot be kept long in a state of elevated intoxication, and that drunkenness will be followed either by immediate frenzy or by such wretched ruin both of mind and body as must render its victims despicably miserable.[12]

I find that my thoughts upon Drinking will not be contained in one paper. I shall therefore break off here, and reserve to myself afterwards to continue the subject, while I think it agreeable to myself and my readers.

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company, which a man who has been drinking should never do. Such a man will undertake any thing; he is without skill in inebriation."

Boswell refers again to drinking as "one of the great arts of living," in *Hyp.* 31; see also *Hyp.* 32, on ordered drinking.

[10] *Iliad*, 1 and 4.

[11] Cf. on the use of this word, *Life of J.*, 2. 178:

I asked him if *humiliating* was a good word. He said, he had seen it frequently used, but he did not know it to be legitimate English.

[12] Boswell truly speaks from humiliating experience; see *Letters of B.*, 1. 106, 117, 169, 236; 2. 369, 446, 461; *Life of J.*, 1. 502; 2. 499; 4. 102 n. 1, 127; *Hebr.*, 294 ff.

No. XXXI. April 1780.

[ON DRINKING—*Continued*]

Crebris & ingentibus poculis
Omne ingenium ingurgitabat.—Aulus Gellius.[1]

"He quite drowned his faculties in frequent and excessive cups."

I DOUBT not that several of my readers have smiled at the grave philosophical manner in which I treated Drinking in my last number. For Drinking is generally considered as a mere jovial recreation, quite unconnected with ratiocination or reflexion; so that a man might as well write a serious meditation upon its concomitant Dancing, as the ancient saying is "*Nemo saltat sobrius*—No man dances when sober."

Dancing, however, itself has been made the subject of a very well composed book by the ingenious Signor *Gallini.*[2] And the multifarious Dr. *Priestley*[3] has in some of his elementary tracts annalized the principles and progress, the causes and effects of

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[1] *Noctes Atticae*, 15. 2. 1. There is no reason for the sentence to be arranged in verses.

[2] Giovanni Andrea Battista Gallini (1728–1805) was a dancing-master, and one of the chief dancers and stage-managers of the Haymarket Theatre. He married a daughter of the 3d Earl of Abingdon, and so delighted the Pope with his art as to receive the knighthood of the Golden Spur, on the strength of which he called himself *Sir John* on his return to England. He published two works: *A Treatise on the Art of Dancing* (1762), which was largely borrowed from de Cahusac's *La Danse Ancienne et Moderne* (1754); and *Critical Observations on the Art of Dancing; to which is added, a Collection of Cotillons or French Dances* (1770?). It is probably the latter to which Boswell refers.

[3] Dr. Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), whom Boswell elsewhere calls a "literary jack-of-all-trades," was one of the first Unitarians and the "discoverer" of oxygen, which he called *dephlogisticated air*. His works, which fill twenty-six volumes, cover chemistry, theology, language, history, ethics, psychology, and politics; much of his writing was done in the family circle, with conversation going on about him. He called himself a materialist, but remained a "primitive Christian." From his essay on government (1768) Bentham derived the phrase "the greatest good of the greatest number"; he was a friend to the revolutions in France, Corsica, and America. Priestley emigrated to the United States in 1794, and settled in Pennsylvania, where he continued his writing—annotating the whole Bible, completing his church history, and issuing various shorter religious works. See *Life of J.*, 2. 142 and 4. 274 n. 6, for contemptuous treatment of Priestley by both Johnson and Boswell.

Drunkenness, with a precision of style, that if the passage were pronounced upon the stage with a proper ludicrous inflexibility of features, such as *Weston* used to exhibit in *Dr. Last*,[4] could not fail to set a playhouse in a roar, as loud as ever wine and wit did a table.

But I certainly need not be afraid that my writing upon Drinking in a serious manner, as one of the great arts of living, when well conducted,[5] should expose me to ridicule, when it is considered that the divine *Plato* himself has thought it a subject of importance enough to be very attentively examined and regulated in his books of *Laws*. In these books there are several particular ordinances applicable to his own system of government, such as that a magistrate should not taste wine during the year that he is in office. But the general result of the great man's thoughts upon Drinking is exceedingly well given by *Aulus Gellius* in the chapter from which my motto is taken. The original is so well expressed that I cannot omit it, and I shall endeavour to put it into English as well as I can, not knowing of any translation into our language of that author, though containing such a variety of instruction and entertainment.

"Ex insula Creta quispiam ætatem Athenis agens Platonicum se esse philosophum dicebat & viderier gestibat: erat autem nihili homo & nugator atque in Græcæ facundiæ gloria jactabundus, & præterea vini libidine adusque ludibria ebriosus. Is in conviviis juvenum, quæ agitare Athenis hebdomadibus lunæ solemne nobis fuit, simulatque modus epulis factus; & utiles delectabilesque sermones cœperant, tum silentio ad audiendum petito loqui cœptabat: atque id genus vili & incondita verborum caterva hortabatur omnes ad bibendum, idque se facere ex decreto Platonico prædicabat; tamquam Plato in libris, quos de legibus composuit, laudes ebrietatis copiosissime scripsisset, utilemque esse eam bonis ac fortibus viris

[4] Thomas Weston (1737–1776) was the son of a cook to George II; he began life under his father, was sent to sea as discipline, and finally became one of the greatest comedians of his time, a mainstay of Foote's forces. He was greatest in portraying guileless simplicity; Davies said that his *Abel Drugger* equaled Garrick's, and Garrick is said to have had difficulty in keeping his countenance when playing with Weston. *Dr. Last*, in Foote's *Devil upon Two Sticks* (produced 1768) was a part created by Weston; he played the same character in Bickerstaff's *Dr. Last in his Chariot* (1769). The part was a popular one, and he appeared in it frequently.

[5] Cf. *Hyp.* 30 n. 9.

censuisset. Ac simul inter ejusmodi orationem crebris & ingentibus poculis omne ingenium ingurgitabat; fomitem esse quemdam dicens & incitabulum ingenii virtutisque, si mens & corpus hominis vino flagraret. Sed enim Plato, in primo & secundo de legibus, non, ut ille nebulo opinabatur, ebrietatem istam turpissimam, quæ labefacere & imminuere hominum mentes solet, laudavit; sed hanc largiorem paulo jucundioremque vini invitationem, quæ fieret sub quibusdam quasi arbitris & magistris conviviorum sobriis, non improbavit. Nam & modicis honestisque inter bibendum remissionibus refici integrarique animos ad instauranda sobrietatis officia existimavit, reddique eos sensim lætiores atque ad intentiones rursum capiendas fieri habiliores: & simul, si qui penitus in iis affectionum cupiditatumque errores inessent quos aliquis pudor reverens concelaret, ea omnia sine gravi periculo, libertate per vinum data, detegi, & ad corrigendum medendumque fieri opportuniora. Atque hoc etiam Plato ibidem dicit, non defugiendas esse neque respuendas hujuscemodi exercitationes adversum propulsandum vini violentiam; neque ullum umquam continentem prorsum ac temperantem satis fideliter visum esse, cujus vita virtusque non inter ipsa errorum pericula & in mediis voluptatum illecebris explorata sit. Nam cui Libentiæ Gratiæque omnes conviviorum incognitæ sint, quique illarum omnino expers sit; si eum forte ad participandas ejusmodi voluptates aut voluntas tulerit, aut casus induxerit, aut necessitas compulerit, deleniri plerumque & capi; neque mentem animumque ejus consistere, sed vi quadam nova ictum labescere. Congrediendum igitur censuit & tamquam in acie quadam cum voluptariis rebus, cumque ista vini licentia comminus decernendum: ut adversum eas non fuga simus tuti nec absentia; sed vigore animi & constanti præsentia moderatoque usu temperantiam continentiamque tueamur; & calefacto simul refotoque animo si quid in eo vel frigidæ tristitiæ vel torpentis verecundiæ fuerit deluamus."[6]

"There was a man from the Island of Crete who came to live at Athens, and in a vain-glorious manner assumed the character of a Platonick philosopher. He was, however, an insignificant, trifling fellow, a mere boaster of possessing the Grecian eloquence, and so much a drunkard as to be laughed at by every body. This man found his way into the feasts of the young men held at Athens every lunar week, and as soon as supper was over and useful and agreeable conversation had begun, he would beg of the company to be silent that he might be heard, and in a coarse disorderly tumult of words would urge all of them to drink away; and

[6] Comparison of this passage to the Latin (edition of Gronovius) shows that Boswell left several errors uncorrected: the London Magazine text gives in line 3 of the quotation, *Græca facundia glorin;* in line 30, *illatum;* in the last line, *delemus. Labescere,* in line 33, is a rare variant of the usually accepted *labascere.*

this forsooth he pretended to do upon the ſtrength of Plato's opinion, as if Plato in his books of laws had very fully written the praiſes of drunkenneſs, and declared it to be uſeful to good and gallant men. At the ſame time in the midſt of this kind of diſcourſe, he quite drowned his faculties in frequent and exceſſive cups, ſaying, that to have a man's mind and body inflamed with wine cheriſhed and incited genius and virtue. But the truth is, that Plato in his firſt and ſecond books of laws, does not, as that wretch ſuppoſed, commend that baſe drunkenneſs which enfeebles and diminiſhes the underſtanding; but does not diſapprove of that free and joyous indulgence in wine which was practiſed under the ſuperintendance of ſome ſober maſters and governors of convivial meetings. For he thought that by moderate and decent intervals of relaxation over wine, our minds are reſtored and renewed for the performance of ſerious duties, and that they are gradually cheered and rendered more fit for reſuming their ſtudies. As alſo that if they have any erroneous affections and deſires which a kind of reſpectful diffidence conceals, all theſe may in the eaſy liberty of wine be diſcovered without great danger, and put in the way of being corrected and cured. And Plato in the ſame place alſo ſays, that we ſhould not ſhun or refuſe ſcenes of Drinking, becauſe they will ſerve as exerciſes to ſecure us againſt the violence of wine. For he never reckoned any man to be of ſufficiently approved continence and temperance whoſe life had never been paſſed amidſt dangers of error, or his virtue tried amidſt the allurements of pleaſure. For he to whom all the joys and graces of convivial feſtivity are unknown, and who has never experienced them, if ever inclination leads, chance carries, or neceſſity obliges him to taſte theſe pleaſures, is inſtantly entangled and taken, nor can his mind and ſoul remain firm, but fall under an unuſual ſtroke. He thought therefore that we ſhould engage with pleaſures as if in a field of battle, and among the reſt with the pleaſure of Drinking, that we may be ſafe from them not by flight or abſence, but by vigour and conſtant preſence of mind, and a moderate uſe of what is agreeable, may maintain temperance and continence; and that our ſouls being once warmed and comforted, we may get rid of any latent, cold ſadneſs, or torpid timidity."

This excellent paſſage proves that the divine Plato was ſenſible that drinking wine is a great pleaſure, and that it requires being trained to reſiſt exceſs in it. It alſo ſhows in the plaineſt manner the advantages which the wiſe may derive from Drinking. But I find that *Aulus Gellius* has left me no room for writing more in this paper. I do not fear cenſure on this account. For a periodical author, like one who is drawn for the militia, will be excuſed if he finds as good a man in his place. I take it for granted I ſhall

rather be praised for the substitution, as Sir Roger de Coverley's chaplain was, for giving his congregation the sermons of Tillotson or Barrow, or other eminent divines, instead of his own.[7] And surely none of my readers can be displeased with *an attick evening's entertainment*.[8]

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[7] *The Spectator*, 106, 269.

[8] One of Boswell's title-puns (for which see *Hyp.* 55 n. 6). Here he combines the familiar cadence of *Arabian Nights Entertainments* and an allusion to *Noctes Atticae*, the work he has just quoted.

No. XXXII. May 1780.

[ON DRINKING—*Continued*]

At vos quo lubet hinc abite lymphæ
Vini pernicies, et ad severos
Migrate, hic merus est Thyonianus.—CATULLUS.

"Hence water—crystal though thou art,
From my convivial board depart;
Go where thou wilt, and spoil the wine;
Go where sad, rigid mortals dine,
My heart to cheer, and griefs to cure,
The grape's rich bounty shall be pure."[1]

WRITING upon Drinking is in one respect, I think, like Drinking itself: one goes on imperceptibly, without knowing where to stop; and as one calls for the other bottle to his friends, I press the other paper upon my readers. Happy should I be, could I flatter myself, that this paper will be received with as hearty a satisfaction as is generally felt upon the opening of an additional bottle.

Sir William Temple's metaphorical remark, that "Life, like wine, must not be drawn to the dregs,"[2] should be before me while I write upon the use of wine. To preach over one's glass is a very expressive phrase for tediousness in a social meeting; and to preach upon taking a glass till every body is weary, would be very disgusting.

Yet Drinking is a subject of such extent and variety, that it is not easy to quit it soon. My readers, therefore, will make allowance; and perhaps they will find more entertainment in these *Recherches Philosophiques à boire*[2a] than they expected.

The ingenuity of the poets has been as much exercised upon Drinking as upon love itself. It would be improper to fill my papers too frequently with quotations. I shall therefore only

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[1] *Carm.*, 27. 5. Originally the last word of the translation was *sure*; Boswell corrected the error by a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 33.

[2] In the essay *Of Health and Long Life:*

But so much, I doubt, is certain, that in life, as in wine, he that will drink it good, must not draw it to dregs.

[2a] Originally printed *àboire*, and left unchanged by Boswell.

refer my readers to the fine passages upon the subject in *Lucretius*, and in *Horace*, which every man of taste will read with pleasure again and again. But the most substantial piece for Englishmen is *Thomson's* description of a Drinking-bout, after a fox-chace, where all the strong and coarse circumstances of rustic intoxication are selected and brought together with admirable justness, and in a style of humour, which *Thomson* has exhibited in that single instance.[3]

The Drinking-songs of different nations are innumerable; and are, for the most part, very distinctly marked with national characters. It is remarkable, that many of our English Drinking-songs have that reasoning cast, which is observed so peculiarly to prevail amongst the natives of this island. Perhaps no poetical productions in our language, beneath those which are properly speaking sublime, are more ingenious than some of the verses upon Drinking. "The Tippling Philosophers," by Dr. *Walter Pope*, &c.[4] and "Drinking's a Christian Diversion," by *Congreve*, are compositions

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[3] In *The Seasons* (*Autumn*). In Boswell's references to the classic poets he is probably thinking of Lucretius, *De Re. Nat.*, 3. 476 ff., 912 ff.; and Horace, *Epist.*, 3. 5; *Odes*, 1. 18, 27; 3. 21; *Sat.*, 2. 6. This last poem, containing the passage *O noctes coenaeque deum*, is a great favorite of Boswell's; see *Hyp.* 58 n. 13.

[4] Originally the line read "Dr. Waller, Pope, &c." Boswell corrected the error by a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 33.

Dr. Walter Pope (d. 1714) was an astronomer and physician, whose literary efforts are criticized by Anthony à Wood as "frivolous things, rather fit to be buried in oblivion with the author than recommended." The first stanza of his *Tippling Philosophers* indicates what Wood despised, and what Boswell considered of excellent merit:

> Diogenes, surly and proud,
> Who snarl'd at the Macedon youth,
> Delighted in wine that was good,
> Because in good wine there was truth;
> But growing as poor as a Job,
> Unable to purchase a flask,
> He chose for his mansion a tub,
> And lived by the scent of the cask.

"To drink is a Christian diversion" is a line from Sir Wilfull Witwoud's song in *The Way of the World*, Act 4. Boswell found these songs in Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, where the line from Congreve is rendered, as in this essay, "Drinking's a Christian diversion."

The drinking song in *The Duenna*, part of the "devotions" of the priory of Spanish monks, occurs in Act 3, Scene 5.

of exquisite merit; and the Drinking-song in Mr. *Sheridan's Duenna*, "A Bottle's the Sun of our Table," has an elegance of allusion of fancy, and of expression, which all must admire, though the well-informed and candid will regret, that a writer of such pretty talents should, either from vulgar error, or a desire to gratify an untutored populace, represent the religious of any order in the Roman Catholick church as drunken impostors.

The northern nations are more addicted to the use of strong liquors than the southern, in order to supply by art the want of that genial warmth of blood which the sun produces.[5] It is commonly said, that drinking to excess is not known in the southern regions. But although it is no doubt much more rare in those countries than in the northern, especially amongst the people of rank, it is occasionally practised. Of this we are assured, not only by travellers, but by the books of entertainment in different languages, where the manners of the people are painted. Even in Spain, we meet with Drinking, when we read those exact, and at the same time animated scenes, the Adventures of *Gil Blas*. I know not if the Turks, who make so much use of opium, are ever known to indulge in wine to any considerable degree. But I have heard the late *Earl of Galloway*[6] tell, that when he was at Constantinople, he found some of the Turkish men of fashion very fond of joining his lordship in the pleasure of an enlivening glass. My lord asked one of them, how he ventured to drink wine, as it was forbidden by their religion? The Turk answered, Does not your religion forbid getting drunk?—But he added, "Our prophet prohibited drinking wine, because he knew it would be dangerous in this hot climate: but men of sense know that it was never meant,

[5] See *Hyp.* 33 (the quotation from Blackstone), and *Boswelliana*, 257:

In the southern countries the warmth of the sunny climate makes the people of a due warmth without drinking, but in northern countries men's hearts are as hard as cold iron till heated by wine. In warm countries they are like the softer metals naturally; but with us there is no making any impression on the heart till it is heated by the fire of strong liquor. I look upon every jovial company among us as a forge of friendship.

Contrast to this another reference to the same idea (*Letters of B.*, 1. 169):

My present misfortune is caused by drinking. . . . . Perhaps the coldness of the Scots requires it. But my fiery blood is turned to madness by it.

[6] John, seventh Earl of Galloway, who succeeded to the title in 1773. His journey to Constantinople took place before 1764, while he was still Lord Garlies. Boswell has preserved several anecdotes concerning him in *Boswelliana*, some from the Earl himself and some through the offices of Lord Kenmore.

but that they might use it with discretion." I would not propose this truth as an example of bold freedom of private judgement to be imitated, I only relate an authentic story by way of illustration.

The essential distinction in the use of wine is between *Drinking* and *Drunkenness;* between "making glad the heart of man," and swallowing the "inordinate cup," which is "putting a devil in our mouths to steal away our brains."[7] It was a beautiful thought in a foreigner, who, while a bottle of wine stood before him, of which he took a glass at intervals in the course of an agreeable conversation, pointed to a lamp that was burning in the room, and said, "This wine is oil to my fancy."[8] No general rule can be prescribed for Drinking; for the constitutions of men are infinitely various in that respect, and even the same man is different at different times. Every one therefore must judge for himself, taking care however to judge fairly; for the partitions between the bounds of Drinking and Drunkenness, like those between great wit and madness,[9] are thin. He who has an inclination to trans-

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[7] The first quotation is from the *Psalms*, 104. 15; the second and third are from *Othello*—2. 3 . 311 and 2. 3 . 291, the scene between Iago and the drunken Cassio. Johnson refers to the passage in a conversation on drinking in 1776 (*Life of J.*, 3. 48).

[8] Another anecdote from the Earl of Galloway; cf. *Boswelliana*, 304:

We are apt to imagine that the Turks are a brutal sort of people, totally given up to gross sensuality, and altogether void of gay fancy or the finer feelings. As an instance to the contrary my Lord Galloway tells that he was sitting at Constantinople with a Turkish gentleman, who, though a true Mussulman, took a glass of wine. The custom there is not for a company to drink all at once like a regiment going through their evolutions, but as the intention of drinking is to cheer the spirits, they take a cup of liquor which stands before them just as they feel themselves in need of it. This Turk, after having taken three or four bumpers of champagne, pointed to a lamp which hung above their heads, as they never use candles. "This, says he, "my lord, is to me as the oil is to that lamp." A pretty allusion, as if it had lighted him up. LORD KENMORE.

[9] An allusion to Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, 1. 163—"Great wits are sure to madness near allied." Boswell quotes it again in the *Life of J.*, 3. 199. His interest in the capacities of various men for drinking is revealed in a note of his own to a conversation of 1778 (*Life of J.*, 3. 276):

BOSWELL. "Was not Dr. John Campbell a very inaccurate man in his narrative, Sir? He once told me, that he drank thirteen bottles of port at a sitting."

[Note] Lord Macartney observes upon this passage, "I have heard him tell many things, which, though embellished by their mode of narrative, had their foundation in truth; but I never remember any thing approaching to this. If he had written it, I should have supposed some wag had put the figure of one before the three."—I am, however, absolutely certain that Dr. Campbell told me it, and I gave particular attention to it, being myself a lover of wine, and therefore curious to hear whatever is remarkable concerning drinking. There can be no

gress the bounds of reasonable refreshment, should be on his guard, and keep within them; while others, who are favoured with more temperate appetites, may solace themselves in a more free security.

Drunkenness is most frequently to be ascribed to the same cause which the poet points out for the adultery of Ægisthus. It is the vice of unoccupied men.[10] Dr. *Robertson*, in his History of America, observes, that among savages the love of strong liquors is excessive.

"Whatever (says he) be the occasion, or pretext, on which the Americans assemble, the meeting always terminates in a debauch. Many of their festivals have no other object; and they welcome the return of them with transports of joy. As they are not accustomed to restrain any appetite, they set no bounds to this. The riot often continues, without intermission, several days; and whatever be the fatal effects of their excess, they never cease from Drinking as long as one drop of liquor remains. The persons of greatest eminence, the most distinguished warriors, and the chiefs most renowned for their wisdom, have no more command of themselves than the most obscure member of the community. Their eagerness for present enjoyment renders them blind to its fatal consequences; and those very men, who in other situations seem to possess a force of mind more than human, are in this instance inferior to children in foresight, as well as consideration, and mere slaves of brutal appetite. When their passions, naturally strong, are heightened and inflamed by drink, they are guilty of the most enormous outrages; and the festivity seldom concludes without deeds of violence, or bloodshed."[11]

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doubt that some men can drink, without suffering any injury, such a quantity as to others appears incredible. It is but fair to add, that Dr. Campbell told me, he took a very long time to this great potation; and I have heard Dr. Johnson say: "Sir, if a man drinks very slowly, and lets one glass evaporate before he takes another, I know not how long he may drink." Dr. Campbell mentioned a Colonel of Militia who sat with him all the time, and drank equally. Boswell.

For Johnson's resolve to avoid wine because he could not drink in moderation, see *Hyp.* 33 n. 7.

[10] Ovid, *Remedia Amoris*, 161:

> Quæritis Ægisthus quare sit factus adulter?
> In promptu causa est: desidiosus erat.

Cf. *Life of J.*, 2. 149 (Maxwell's Collectanea):

He said few people had intellectual resources sufficient to forego the pleasures of wine. They could not otherwise contrive how to fill the interval between dinner and supper.

[11] Book 4, section 100. Boswell does not copy correctly. The fourth sentence

That this account may be exaggerated by those from whom *Robertson* has it, and the exaggeration be somewhat magnified by his eloquence, I can allow; but the substance of the fact cannot be called in question. And indeed we find it sometimes exemplified in the most regular state of society.

> How pale each worshipful and reverend guest
> Rise from a Clergy or a City feast,

is the sarcasm of a satirist;[12] but is not altogether a poetical fiction; and that distinction of character makes no difference, when men are drinking largely, we have all upon some occasions observed.

As Drinking can only be a good in so far as it is really a pleasure, or an enlivening refreshment, I disapprove of all external incitements to it. Indeed all *orderly Drinking* is calculated for *Drunkenness*. I mean all that Drinking in evolutions of equal bumpers, with toasts, to which justice is to be done, and honour is to be done; and in short, the company are to get themselves drunk under the pretext of laudable principles.[13] Let false notions of hospitality and gallantry in Drinking be banished from the mind, and Drunkenness will be much less frequent amongst men of better education. It is assumed as a maxim, that there should be an equality in Drinking as long as men sit together; and a very good story is told of a worthy squire, who knew the constitutions of his neighbours so well, that he had glasses suited to the capacity of each, by which means he could keep strong drinkers and weak

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should read "whatever *may* be the fatal effects"; the fifth, "renowned for their wisdom, have no *greater* command of themselves . . . ."

[12] Pope, *Sat.*, 2. 75.

[13] Cf. *Letters of B.*, 1. 117, 236, and the long conversation upon drinking, especially for the sake of politeness, in the *Life of J.*, 3. 373 ff.; Boswell asserts that "the great difficulty in resisting wine is from benevolence," in case a "good worthy man asks you to taste his wine"; Johnson responds that "no good and worthy man will insist upon another man's drinking wine." A contrast between the habits of Boswell's day and the days of Johnson's youth may be seen in *Hebr.*, 67, where it is emphasized that drinking had decreased in the course of the eighteenth century; later Boswell remarks, anent *orderly drinking*, "I knew it was the rule of modern high life not to drink to any body" (*ibid.*, 405). As early as 1712, *The Spectator* presents the objections of a gentleman living in the country to "that damnable doctrine and position of the necessity of a bumper" (No. 474). Contrast this number of *The Hypochondriack* to the ridiculous remarks about concentration on the "growing ebriety" in *Hyp.* 30.

in unison for a whole afternoon. But I see no good reason for such attention. For why should not there be inequality amongſt men, when Drinking, as well as upon other occasions? It is argued, that some should not sit sober, and be spies upon others when intoxicated. But it is plain that some will always be sober in comparison with the reſt; and it is as fair, that those who are temperate should have the advantage, as those who are "mighty for ſtrong drink."[14] If some people will fill themselves drunk, and be exposed like the slaves of the Spartans,[15] it is their own fault; they do it for pleasure; they have their reward. But it is oppressive, either to oblige temperate men to drink at all, or men of weaker heads for wine than theirs, to drink faſter than they choose to do, and be intoxicated before part of the company is warmed.[16] For

[14] A reduction of *Isa.*, 5. 22—"Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink."

Boswell appends a note to the *Life of J.*, 3. 372, on Waller's ability, while drinking only water himself, "to accommodate his discourse to [that of a company who were drinking wine] as it *sunk*."

[15] Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, 28. The Spartans caused their slaves, the Helots, to become intoxicated before their young masters, so that the rising generation of the state should acquire a distaste for so enfeebling a vice.

Cf. Johnson's remarks on the art of ebriety, *Hyp.* 30 n. 9.

[16] Boswell is probably thinking of such instances as he later records in *Boswelliana*, 327–28:

. . . . Colonel Lutterel was at the house of a gentleman who insiſted on his drinking more than he chose, and locked the door on him. The colonel fell upon a contrivance to get off which succeeded. "Come," said the gentleman, "fill your glass, you muſt drink;" "Sir," said the colonel, "I don't like your wine." The gentleman had nothing to say. 27th May, 1783.

See also the references to Lord Errol (*Life of J.*, 3. 193, 375; *Hebr.*, 118). Cf. Rousseau, *Nouv. Hél.*, 1. 23:

La seule chose sur laquelle je ne jouissois pas de la liberté étoit la durée excessive des repas. J'étois bien le maître de ne pas me mettre à table; mais quand j'y étois une fois, il y falloit reſter une partie de la journée, et boire d'autant. Le moyen d'imaginer qu'un homme et un Suisse n'aimât pas à boire? En effet, j'avoue que le bon vin me paroît une excellente chose, et que je ne hais point à m'en égayer, pourvu qu'on ne m'y force pas. J'ai toujours remarqué que les gens faux sont sobres, et la grande réserve de la table annonce assez souvent des moeurs feintes et des âmes doubles. Un homme franc craint moins ce babil affectueux et ces tendres épanchements qui précèdent l'ivresse; mais il faut savoir s'arrêter et prévenir l'excés. Voilà ce qu'il ne m'étoit guère possible de faire avec d'aussi déterminés buveurs que les Valaisans, des vins aussi violents que ceux du pays, et sur des tables où l'on ne vit jamais d'eau. Comment se résoudre à jouer si sottement le sage, et facher de si bonnes gens? Je m'enivrois donc par reconnaissance; et ne pouvant payer mon écot de ma bourse, je le payois de ma raison.

This passage may have been in part the source also of Boswell's ideas on drinking for the sake of benevolence (see n. 13 above).

my own part, I never drank less than I chose to do, because others were not *drinking fair*, as it is called; and I really think, that Drinking may be truſted to every man's own inclination. Happy would it be, if even then, Drunkenness were rare. I do not, however, mean to forbid that social glee by which men are insensibly encouraged to exhilarate themselves. But all adventitious means, and chiefly all compulsion, should be avoided in Drinking. Where there is compulsion, there is no pleasure.

It is truely wonderful, what a serious consequence Drinking may, in process of time, acquire in the œconomy of civilised life. We find this amongſt the ancient Greeks and Romans; but the nation moſt celebrated for it amongſt the moderns, is the Irish. In the late *Earl of Cheſterfield's Miscellaneous Works*, of which Messieurs *Dilly* have given a splendid edition, which does them honour, and will ever be an ornament to polite libraries, we find several very keen exclamations upon that subject.[17] In his eighth letter to the Bishop of Waterford, his lordship says, "Drinking is a moſt beaſtly vice in every country, but it is really a ruinous one to Ireland: nine gentlemen in ten in Ireland are impoverished by the great quantity of claret; which, from miſtaken notions of hospitality and dignity, they think it necessary should be drunk in their houses." In his seventy-sixth, he mentions five thousand tuns of wine being annually imported into that country; and in his eighty-sixth there is the following passage: "If it would but please God, by his lightning, to blaſt all the vines in the world, and by his thunder to turn all the wines now in Ireland sour, as I moſt sincerely wish he would, Ireland would enjoy a degree of quiet and plenty that it has never yet known." Lord Cheſterfield, I admit, was too fine a gentleman; yet he had *some* "reason in his rage,"[18] when he wrote thus. The noble writer adds, "By the way I am not so partial neither to Ireland, as not to pray for the same blessing for this my native country, notwithſtanding the grief

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[17] Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield—diplomat in politics and society, lord-lieutenant of Ireland (1744–46), and rejected "patron" of Johnson, had died in 1773. The edition of his miscellaneous works was brought out by the Dillys in 1777, in two volumes. The passages quoted occur in Bradshaw's edition of *Lord Chesterfield's Letters* (Scribner, 1892) as *Miscellaneous Letters* 119, 102, 306, respectively.

[18] Pope, *Mor. Ess.*, 3. 152.

and desolation which I know it would occasion in our learned universities, the body of the clergy, and among our knights of shires, burgesses, &c. and in general among all the worthy honeſt gentlemen who toaſt and are toaſted."

Drunkenness, one should think, would be shunned by every man who has once felt the severe sickness and pain which is sometimes the consequence of it. If Ireland be remarkable for Drunkenness, I have found in an Irish poet the only description that I ever saw of its diſtressing effects: so the bane and antidote are both in that country. The description is in a large quarto volume, entitled, "The *Shamrock*, or *Hibernian Cresses*," a collection of poems, "the original production of Ireland,"[19] published a few years ago. It is called *Next Morning;* and I shall transcribe the two firſt ſtanzas.

"What means this fury in my veins?
This fire that hisses through my brains?
Ah me! my head! my head!
My pulses beat; parch'd up my tongue;
Dry are my palms, my nerves unſtrung;
And every sense is fled.

Now nauseous qualms my bosom heave,
And, oh! such sad sensations give,
Too exquisite to name!
In dizzy miſts my eye balls swim;
A languor creeps o'er every limb,
And all unmans my frame."

From these my readers will judge of its intention and effect. It very properly concludes with a resolution to be,

"Fair temperance, ever thine."

In a religious view, the consideration of Drinking to excess is ſtill more serious; and *there* every man's "conscience muſt accuse, or else excuse him;" for the subject is in general so nice and complicated as to each individual, that one should not judge another; but in this matter, above all, should remember, that "to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth."[20]

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[19] Samuel Whyte, *The Shamrock, a collection of poems . . . . the original production of Ireland;* Dublin 1772, London 1773.

[20] *Rom.*, 14. 4.

I met with a sentence upon the vice of Drunkenness in *Boſton's* "Four-fold State of Man," a pious, practical book, by a Scotch Presbyterian divine,[21] and I marked it in my pocket-book, as ſtrongly and juſtly said. "Drunkenness hurts ſoul and body, and haſtens death, while it unfits us for it." I truſt that none of my readers will imagine that I mean to vindicate the vice of Drunkenness, though I speak with relish of the innocent gaiety of Drinking. But leſt they should, I shall end my speculations on the subject with the caution of an Italian poet, mentioned by Mr. Addison, in his Travels, who declared in a preface, that if there was any thing in his writings againſt the doctrine of the church, he retracted and renounced it.[22]

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[21] Thomas Boston (1676–1732) was one of the evangelical party in the Scottish church, somewhat more refined and cultivated than many of his colleagues. Millar (*Literary History of Scotland*, 353) says that his writings, "though not comparable to the writings of William Law, ... are distinguished by a fervor and sincerity which is not unattractive, despite a few ludicrous and undignified touches; and the tone of mysticism which prevails in some passages renders them very acceptable to those who like it."

[22] Addison's *Remarks on several Parts of Italy, Etc. In the Years 1701, 1702, 1703* (*Works*, Philadelphia, 1888, 2. 321):

> I had the good luck to be at Florence when there was an opera acted, which was the eighth that I had seen in Italy. I could not but smile to read the solemn proteſtation of the poet in the firſt page, where he declares that he believes neither in the fates, deities, or deſtinies; and that if he has made use of the words, it is purely out of a poetical liberty, and not from his real sentiments, for that in all these particulars he believes as the Holy Mother Church believes and commands.

Boswell and Johnson agreed in disparaging this work of Addison (*Hebr.*, 353), Boswell on the score that the classic allusions had been made equally well by an Italian, and Johnson because it was "a tedious book."

No. XXXIII. June 1780.

[ON DRINKING—*Concluded*]

O miseri quorum gaudia crimen habent.

"Unhappy they whose joys are ſtain'd with vice."—CORNELIUS GALLUS.[1]

"MORE laſt words of Mr. Richard Baxter," we are told by the Spectator were published, upon his *Laſt Words* having great success.[2] My laſt paper I thought was my concluding one on Drinking; yet I am going to give another. I cannot say for the same reason that a supplement was brought out to Baxter's laſt words; for I know not whether my former drinking diſſertations have been ſucceſsful or not. But as I conſider one of the beſt reaſons for ſpeaking or writing upon any ſubject is being ſenſible that one has ſomething to ſay, I hope my readers will not be diſpleaſed with me for communicating ſome additional thoughts upon the effects of ſtrong liquors.

Some years ago I compoſed the following lines:

> Let grave phyſicians learnedly explain
> How fermentation riſes to the brain;
> How liquor finds a paſſage to the heart,
> And, warming that, ſends warmth to ev'ry part;
> All that the wiſeſt of the doctors know
> Jack Falſtaff knew two hundred years ago;
> The rogue with Bacchus took his chief delight,
> Yet great Apollo lov'd the joyous knight.

The paſſage alluded to is in the ſecond part of Henry the Fourth, Act IV. Scene VII. "A good ſherris-ſack hath a two-fold operation in it; it aſcends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish, dull, and crudy vapours which inviron it, makes it appre-

[1] From the *Elegies* of Maximianus Etruscus (I. 180), long believed to be the work of Cornelius Gallus.

[2] *The Spectator*, 445:

I remember, upon Mr. Baxter's death, there was published a ſheet of very good ſayings, inſcribed, "The laſt words of Mr. Baxter." The title ſold ſo great a number of theſe papers, that about a week after there came out a ſecond ſheet, inſcribed, "More laſt words of Mr. Baxter."

Boswell inserts the correct information that this was *Richard* Baxter (1615–1691); he was "the chief of the Proteſtant ſchoolmen," and author of the *Saints' Everlasting Reſt.*

hensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes, which delivered over to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is, the warming of the blood, which before cold and settled left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice: but the sherris warms it, and make it course from the inwards to the parts extreme; it illuminateth the face, which as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm, and then the vital commoners, and inland petty spirits, muster me all to their captain, the heart, who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage; and this valour comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work, and learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till sack commences it, and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it, that Prince Harry is valiant; for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath, like lean, steril, and bare land, manured, husbanded, and tilled, with excellent endeavour of drinking good, and good store of, fertile sherris, that he is become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them should be to forbear thin potations, and to addict themselves to sack." The different effects of Intoxication upon different people are exceedingly curious to contemplate, and I believe cannot be explained upon any regular principles. An opinion has been generally entertained that the real character of a man is best shown when he is drunk, for that then he is without disguise. I cannot admit[3] the truth of this opinion. On the contrary I am persuaded that Drunkenness frequently alters a man's real character, and creates one totally different, so that instead of being without disguise, he is, according to the common phrase, "disguised in liquor." I have known a man of the gentlest temper become violent, harsh, and quarrelsome by Drinking. That fear will be dispelled by Intoxication I take to be a general proposition which will always hold true; for to use another common phrase, every man is "*pot valiant.*" Intoxication inflames passion and dims judgement, and therefore blind animal courage is produced by it, insomuch that as *Horace* observes, *In*

[3] Originally *omit*; corrected by Boswell in a note printed at the end of *Hyp.* 34.

prelium trudit inermem.[4] "It drives one unarmed into the dangers of battle." But I imagine this is the only uniform effect of drunkenness; and in other respects the changes upon the disposition are quite uncertain, fantastical, and capricious. So far is it from being constantly true that there is "*in vino veritas* truth in those who are filled with wine,"[5] that I know one of the most open and honest men in the world who, when he has the misfortune to be intoxicated, becomes quite cunning and deceitful, conceals his genuine sentiments and feelings, and makes the strongest professions of regard to those whom, when in his sober senses, he most dislikes.

I am, indeed, anxious to defend myself against the imputation of being an advocate for Drunkenness, and therefore I would carefully prevent my readers from giving credit to any of the supposed symptoms of virtue which have been ascribed to it. Drinking is a pleasure no doubt, but it is a dangerous pleasure, and what should make us most afraid of it is, that an indulgence in excess of drinking grows upon a man, and gradually incapacitates him for resuming the exercise of his best faculties. I shall never forget the saying of a noble lord, who professes to be a man of pleasure, but never drinks to excess. "I like drinking (said he) exceedingly, but I do not think it worth everything else; and a man who drinks much can do nothing else." *Montaigne*,[6] who censures drinking as the grossest, most sensual, and least elegant of all our enjoyments, allows it the merit of being the last pleasure which forsakes us; for to be sure a man is merely passive in drinking, and can to the last moment of his life sip the most delicious liquors of Intoxication. I think the use to be made of this circumstance is to resolve

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[4] A variant of Horace's *Epist.*, 1. 5 . 17. Modern editors render the phrase, *in proelia trudit inertem;* the editions of Bond (1643), Dacier (1727), and others before the mid-eighteenth century, give *inermem.* The singular *proelium* is probably the result of Boswell's quoting from memory.

[5] Boswell translates this phrase elaborately in the *Life of J.*, 2. 215–16, also:

> After urging the common plausible topicks, I at last had recourse to the maxim *in vino veritas*, a man who is well warmed with wine will speak truth. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that may be an argument for drinking, if you suppose men in general to be liars. . . ."

[6] Montaigne's name was originally printed *Montague;* Boswell did not correct the mistake. The allusion is to the essay *Of Drunkenness:*

> Drunkenness seems, to me, to be a gross and brutish Vice. . . . . The incommodities of old Age, that stand in need of some refreshment and support, might with reason beget in me a desire of this faculty, it being as it were the last pleasure the course of years deprives us of.

that drinking should be only the pleasure of old age. Let our youth and manhood be employed in the various duties of active life and better enjoyments, and when old age requires a consolatory cup we may take it. If we should exceed in the gratification, there will be less waste of useful time and talents than at an earlier period.

I have often wondered that men should not be afraid to get drunk;[7] to put themselves into a state in which, being deprived of their reason, they are at the mercy of every one who may choose to take advantage of them. Were it to be proposed to a company in direct terms to go mad together, and take their chance of what mischief might ensue, I believe they would be startled; *Anacreon*, indeed, positively declares his purpose to go mad. "θέλω θέλω μανῆναι."[8] But he was thinking only of the jovial enthusiasm, without considering the possible consequences. I knew a gentleman of high rank in the law who when intoxicated was made to accept

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[7] The remarks in this and the preceding paragraph are comparable to various statements by Johnson, who gave up wine largely because he found he could not use it in moderation; see *Life of J.*, 3. 278:

> Talking of drinking wine, he said, "I did not leave off wine, because I could not bear it; I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. . . . ." Boswell. "Why then, Sir, did you leave it off?" Johnson. "Why, Sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over himself. I shall not begin to drink wine again, till I grow old, and want it. Boswell. "I think, Sir, you once said to me, that not to drink wine was a great deduction from life." Johnson. "It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure; but I do not say a diminution of happiness. There is more happiness in being rational."

See also *ibid.*, 2. 498; 4. 84, 172 n. 2; *Hebr.*, 244; and Johnson's *Life of Addison:*

> Who, that ever asked succours from Bacchus, was able to preserve himself from being enslaved by his auxiliary?

[8] *Anacreontea*, 8. 31. In the magazine text μανῆναι was given without the accent, and θέλω was given as θελῶ; both were left uncorrected by Boswell. For the changes in a man after he has been drinking, and debates as to whether they are good or bad, see *Life of J.*, 3. 47–49 ("he is not improved; he is only not sensible of his defects"), 372—both extended conversations; and *Hebr.*, 370 (1773, 1785):

> He urged, that "in proportion as drinking makes a man different from what he is before he is drunk, it is bad; because it has so far affected his reason." But may it not be answered, that a man may be altered by it *for the better;* that his spirits may be exhilarated, without his reason being affected. On the general subject of drinking, however, I do not mean positively to take the other side. I am *dubius, non improbus.*

In this essay Boswell is attempting to maintain a position not natural to him, to judge by his return to early arguments in the Hebridean passage.

a bill for four hundred pounds along with a dear bottle companion, and as he was not more intelligent at the time than one is in sleep he had not the leaſt recollection of the matter, when a demand was made upon him authenticated by his own subscription. The money was luckily recovered from the real debtor in the bill. But the ſtory shows how a man may be totally ruined when overpowered by wine. If men will intoxicate themselves, they should each have a sober keeper attending to be in readiness to prevent every kind of mischief. A nobleman who used to grow very passionate, and commit great outrages when he drank freely, came at laſt to use the precaution of having a ſteady, robuſt, half-pay lieutenant to sit by him, and whenever he began to rise in fury the lieutenant exercised the authority committed to him when my lord was rational, and held him upon his seat.

The danger of committing atrocious crimes when drunk, should make one shudder, and be an effectual check to the shocking indulgence. It is very erroneous to suppose that Drunkenness is any excuse for crimes at a human tribunal, whatever it may be at the throne of Heaven. The subject is treated in a maſterly way by an excellent author whom the world has lately loſt, *Sir William Blackſtone*, in his Commentaries on the Law of England, a book in which the philosopher, the scholar, and the gentleman are united with the lawyer.[9] My readers I am sure will thank me for presenting them with the passage.

"As to artificial, voluntarily contracted madness, by Drunkenness or Intoxication, which, depriving men of their reason, puts them in a temporary phrenzy, our law looks upon this as an aggravation of the offence, rather than as an excuse for any criminal misbehaviour. A Drunkard, says Sir Edward Coke, who is *voluntarius dæmon*, hath no privileges thereby; but what hurt or ill soever he doth, his Drunkenness doth aggravate it; *nam omne crimen ebrietas et incendit et detegit.* It hath been

[9] Sir William Blackstone (1723–1780), called to the bar in 1746, was made doctor of civil law in 1750; he was not famous as a pleader until after his successes as a lecturer on law at Oxford. Finding that pirated editions of his commentaries were getting abroad, he published the first volume of his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* in 1765; subsequent parts came out in the succeeding four years. The work was intended to be an informal explanation, for the instruction of the nobility and gentry in the laws of their country. Blackstone's style is characterized by Bentham as "cold, reserved, and wary, exhibiting a frigid pride."

observed, that the real use of ſtrong liquors, and the abuse of them by drinking to excess, depend much upon the temperature of the climate in which we live. The same indulgence which may be necessary to make the blood move in Norway, would make an Italian mad. A German, therefore, says the president Montesquieu drinks through cuſtom founded upon conſtitutional necessity; A Spaniard drinks through choice, or out of the mere wantonness of luxury; and Drunkenness, he adds, ought to be more severely punished, where it makes men mischievous and mad, as in Spain and Italy, than where it only renders them ſtupid and heavy, as in Germany and more northern countries. And accordingly, in the warmer climate of Greece, a law of Pittacus enacted, that he who committed a crime when drunk, should receive a double punishment, one for the crime itself, and the other for the ebriety which prompted him to commit it. The Roman law, indeed, made great allowances for this vice: "*per vinum delapsis capitalis poena remittitur.*" But the law of England, considering how easy it is to counterfeit this excuse, and how weak an excuse it is (though real) will not suffer any man thus to privilege one crime by another.

END OF VOLUME I

ERRATA FOR VOLUME I, *THE HYPOCHONDRIACK*

Page 115, l. 4, *for* passion *read* passions.
Page 150, l. 3, *magus*, Boswell's error for *maius*.
Page 153, l. 2, "finished," Boswell's error for "furnished."
Page 161, l. 14, *for* up *read* a.
Page 167, l. 2, *for* thought *read* though.
Page 184, l. 19, *for* talk *read* task.
Page 214, l. 14, *ipse tibi*, Boswell's error for *ipsi*.
Page 214, l. 23, *for* but it should *read* but if it should.
Page 215, l. 29, *for* interpetration *read* interpretation.
Page 267, l. 12, *for* ſtrewd *read* ſtrewed.
Page 276, l. 15, *for* slated *read* salted.
Page 296, l. 14, *for* degress *read* degrees.
Page 322, l. 1, *for* implicity *read* implicitly.
Page 352, l. 6, *for* make *read* makes.

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